

By: ROSALIND TURNER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHILDREN,
FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

To: SARAH HOHLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Subject: PROPOSAL TO RE-DESIGNATE FOXWOOD SCHOOL AS A
SCHOOL FOR PROFOUND AND SEVERE LEARNING NEEDS
AND HIGHVIEW SCHOOL AS A SCHOOL FOR COMPLEX
LEARNING NEEDS; RELOCATE BOTH SCHOOLS ON TO AN
ALTERNATIVE SITE; REMOVE THE BOARDING PROVISION
AT FOXWOOD SCHOOL AND CHANGE THE AGE-RANGE OF
HIGHVIEW SCHOOL TO INCLUDE POST-16.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Cabinet member is request to agree to issue a public notice to redesignate Foxwood and Highview Schools; to remove the boarding provision at Foxwood School; to change the age range of Highview School to include post-16 provision; and to relocate the schools.

Introduction

1. The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 4 November 2009, supported a recommendation to consult on the proposal to redesignate and relocate Foxwood and Highview Schools and to remove the boarding provision at Foxwood School.

The Proposal

2. (1) The original proposal was to redesignate Foxwood School as a school for profound and severe learning needs and Highview School as a school for complex learning needs (with effect from 1st September 2010); change the age range of Highview School to include post 16 provision (from September 2011); relocate both schools onto the site of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College and remove the boarding provision at Foxwood School (with effect from June 2010).

(2) Following publication of the consultation document, further discussions became necessary with the Governing Body of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College regarding the precise siting of the schools. It was originally proposed to locate the special schools close to the college itself, but an alternative location on site, to the south, is now proposed. Additionally, the Local Authority felt it appropriate to consult on an alternative site location for the two special schools. The second site proposed is land fronting Park Farm Road - part of the former Channel School site. The site adjoins the Folkestone Academy which is an all ability school for boys and girls aged 4-18 years. An Addendum to the Public

Consultation Document was issued as a result of this.

(3) It has been necessary to move the position of Foxwood and Highview Schools in the sequence of school rebuilds within Wave 5 of BSF. We now anticipate the schools being completed by January 2015. This will alter the proposed relocation date.

The Consultation

3. A public consultation document was widely distributed. Hard copies were provided for all parents / carers, students, staff and governors of Foxwood School, Highview School, Brockhill Park Performing Arts College, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Folkestone All-Age Academy. Hard copies or links to the electronic copy on the County's website were distributed to all schools in the area, Local Members, Cabinet Members, SOAB Members, the local Member of Parliament, Shepway District Council, the Diocesan Boards, local libraries, Saltwood Parish Council, Folkestone Town Council, Saltwood Village Society, key colleagues in the Children, Families and Education Directorate and others.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. 121 responses have been received, of which 57 are in favour, 50 are opposed and 14 are undecided.

Views of Local Members

5. (1) Mr Christopher Capon, Member for Hythe is happy with the proposal to re-designate both schools, change the age range of Highview School and end the boarding provision at Foxwood School. With regard to the relocation he has no objection to the principle of either site being used for the new building. He is, however, very much concerned with regard to traffic using the access to the Sandling Road, and feels that the use of access via St John's Road is totally unacceptable.

(2) Miss Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley has concerns about traffic through the village at present and is as anxious as other local people that this problem is not worsened if the two special schools locate to a site on Brockhill Park."

(3) Mr Richard Pascoe, Member for Folkestone North East did not comment.

Views of the Parish Council

6. (1) Saltwood Parish Council has indicated that they have no views at this stage but will comment on the Planning Application if and when received.

(2) Folkestone Town Council has no strong feelings either way regarding the two site options.

Views of the Learning and Skills Council

7. The LSC sees benefit in the proposal such as the potential for the opportunities to widen the curriculum offer and to promote inclusion.

Views of the Governing Body

8. The Governing Body supports the re-designation of the schools, as this better describes the needs of pupils currently being admitted. The Governing Body also supports the removal of residential provision at Foxwood School, which has been without staff or pupils since December 2009. The addition of post 16 provision to Highview School is also a very positive step forward and is fully supported. The Governors recognise that the buildings of both schools are inadequate and welcome the opportunity to have fantastic new buildings to support their pupils' education. The Governors recognise that neither of the current school sites are suitable for the rebuilt schools, and therefore a new site is needed. Inevitably a new site would have advantages and disadvantages for pupils and neighbouring communities, but with good planning and positive working relationships these can all be overcome. The schools desperately need a new building and facilities. It would be the best thing in the world for the children.

Views of the Partnership Board

9. The joint Shepway Partnership Boards support the proposals to re-designate both schools, remove the boarding provision at Foxwood School and change the age range of Highview School to incorporate pupils aged 16-19 years. The Boards also support the proposal to relocate the schools to a single site.

Views of Highways

10. Highways are not in a position to give a formal view until a Transport Assessment at Saltwood has been conducted and that is currently being undertaken. The original Transport Assessment was based on the previous site proposal.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

11. (1) The new building would be provided as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

(2) The schools will continue to receive their revenue budgets in line with the County's funding formula which is linked to the need type of the pupils. The provision of 6th form funding to Highview School will be negotiated as part of the implementation decisions.

Human

(3) There were some redundancies on the closure of the residential provision at Foxwood School. The proposals in themselves do not have an impact on staffing at the schools. However, it is likely that staffing structures would be re-examined by the Governing Body to ensure these are appropriate for delivery in the new school buildings. It is possible that more economies of scale could be achieved through shared staffing. These would be decisions for the Governing Body.

Views of the School Organisation Advisory Board

12 (1) The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 17 March 2010 unanimously supported the proposal and recommended the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education issue a public notice to redesignate Foxwood school to provide for pupils with profound and severe needs, and Highview School to provide for pupils with complex needs; to remove the boarding provision at Foxwood School; and to change the age range of Highview School to include post-16 provision.

(2) The Board recognised and discussed at length the conflicting views and issues relating to the proposed relocation sites. The Board did not express a view as to which proposed relocation site should be included in the public notice. The Board welcomed the ongoing attempts by Cabinet Members and Officers to improve on the site options presented, in order to ensure that the needs of the pupils in Foxwood and Highview schools are met to the maximum extent possible. Board members suggested that the Cabinet Member should make a decision having regard to these on-going attempts.

(3) The report is attached as appendix 1.

Recommendation

13. The Cabinet Member is requested to agree that a Public Notice be issued to redesignate the need types of Foxwood and Highview Schools; to remove the boarding provision at Foxwood School; to change the age range of Highview School to include post-16 provision; and to relocate the schools to a site determined by the Cabinet Member.

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The Local Members are Richard Pascoe, Christopher Capon and Susan Carey

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board - 4 November 2009

School Organisation Advisory Board - 4 March 2010