

By: Director – Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 7 February 2008

Subject: PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE AND ENLARGE ROWHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL AND TO RELOCATE THE WEST KENT HEALTH NEEDS EDUCATION SERVICE AND THE PHOENIX CENTRE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report presents the results of a public consultation on the proposal to relocate Rowhill Special School onto the old West Kent Hospital School site on Main Road in Longfield, enlarge Rowhill Special School to 120 places and relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site at Stock Lane in Wilmington.

It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to relocate and enlarge Rowhill Special School.

Introduction

1. (1) The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 14 November 2007, supported a recommendation to consult on the proposal to relocate Rowhill School onto the old West Kent Hospital School site, enlarge Rowhill School to 120 places and relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site at Stock Lane, Wilmington. The report is attached as Appendix 1.

(2) This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which was taken in December 2007 and January 2008.

Background and Accommodation Issues

2. Rowhill School

(1) Rowhill School is a school for boys and girls aged five to sixteen years who have Behaviour and Learning (B & L) Difficulties.

(2) Rowhill is currently situated in Stock Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7BZ and is a member of the Dartford West Cluster. It was to be re-housed in new purpose built accommodation on the present site.

(3) The local authority has endeavoured over the last 18 months to extend the Rowhill Special School footprint. However due to the restrictions placed on the school site by its Green Belt status, this has not proved possible. The local authority has therefore been active in seeking an alternative site appropriate to the needs of the school.

(4) The current designated pupil number is 96 and they have 105 children on the roll, although this number fluctuates. There are three times as many boys as girls.

Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of social deprivation.

(5) Rowhill Special School was re-designated in September 2004 as a consequence of the outcome of the Special School Review to provide for pupils with Behaviour and Learning difficulties from across the whole of West Kent. During the transition stage, the school's pupil numbers were planned to fall to 96 by 2008.

(6) There has been considerable pressure on places for Behaviour and Learning (B & L) provision in the West Kent area. The local authority considers it more likely that the pressure will increase and therefore seeks this opportunity to increase the provision from 96 to 120 by relocating Rowhill School onto a larger site.

(7) Rowhill Special School received its last Ofsted inspection on 20 January 2006. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with two "Outstandings".

West Kent Health Needs Education Service

3. (1) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service (formerly the West Kent Hospital School Service) is an education service provision run by Kent County Council for children who are unable to attend their home school because of illness.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service at one time occupied the site of the old Woodview School site at Main Road in Longfield, adjacent to the Phoenix Centre. The school buildings were severely damaged in a fire in November 2005 and the school was moved in its entirety to Raynehurst Primary School site in Gravesham. The Phoenix Centre is still housed on the Longfield site.

(3) The current capacity is 40 on site. The service also caters for an additional number of children on home tuition. Currently they have 19 children on the roll, although due to the nature of the service they provide, this number fluctuates.

(4) The provision may include education at home (home tuition), education at a base or education in hospital depending on the illness or needs of the child.

(5) The building at Main Road has now been rebuilt. The rebuild was funded by the insurance settlement.

(6) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service received its last Ofsted inspection on 11th December 2007. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with nine "Outstandings".

The Phoenix Centre

4. (1) The Phoenix Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for 14 – 16 year old boys and girls excluded from mainstream schooling. The Centre will provide the education service for any exclusions that continue for more than the 6th day.

(2) The Phoenix Centre PRU currently occupies the Woodview Site, Main Road Longfield. The Centre is currently using some of the newly rebuilt facilities.

(3) The Centre has a capacity of 32 and also caters for a number of children on home tuition. Currently they have 22 children on the roll with 8 being tutored at home.

(4) The Phoenix Centre received its last Ofsted inspection on 17 October 2006. The report was very positive and awarded the school the overall status of "Good".

Milestone Special School Nursery

5. The Milestone Special School Nursery provision which is sited separately to the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service, is to remain on site and is unaffected by this proposal.

The Proposal

6. (1) The proposal is to relocate Rowhill Special School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford.

(2) Enlarge the school buildings and to increase its capacity from 96 places to 120 places.

(3) The proposal is also to relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington, and to

(4) relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington.

The Consultation

7. (1) The consultation process began on the 3 December 2007 and finished on the 14 January 2008.

(2) A consultation document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2, was circulated according to the County Procedures for Review. This circulation included Local Members, Dartford Borough Council, local libraries, the Member of Parliament and Dartford head teachers. Rowhill Special School, West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre were 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 800 copies of the document were circulated and the document can be viewed on the KCC website.

(3) A public meeting was held at Rowhill School on 18 December 2007. Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Mr Simon Webb, Area Education Officer for Dartford & Gravesham, Mr Colin Feltham, Head of Additional Educational Needs & Resources and other KCC Officers. About 20 people attended.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

8. (1) 46 responses have been received, of which 34 are in favour, and 12 are opposed.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 3.

Public Meeting Responses

(3) Summaries of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting are attached at Appendix 4.

Views of Local Members

9. (1) The Local Member of the ward where Rowhill Special School is currently sited is Mrs Ann Allen. Cllr Allen supports the proposal but asks the local authority to take into account the close proximity of other schools in the area. She also asks that cognisance is taken of the other PRU in the area. Barn End Centre is very close to the Rowhill School Site. Finally she asks that all appropriate Travel Plans are in place.

(2) The Local Member of the ward where it is proposed to re-site Rowhill Special School is Mr Bertie Bassam. Cllr Bassam has been informed and is very happy with the proposal. "I look forward to welcoming Rowhill Special School into Longfield."

Views of Local Member of Parliament

10. The Local Member of Parliament is Dr Howard Stoate. Dr Stoate commented that:

"I have no objection to this proposal. It will provide Rowhill School with the opportunity to finally acquire a site that is appropriate to the growing needs of the school. My only concern is the disruption the move will cause to existing students at the school. Although Rowhill serves the whole of the West Kent area a substantial proportion of the students live in central Dartford within a few miles of the existing site. Moving the school to Longfield will add considerably to their journey time to school each day. Careful consideration will need to be given therefore as to how the impact of this move on existing students can be kept to a minimum."

Views of Dartford Borough Council

11. Dartford Borough Council ward members for Wilmington stated they were pleased that there were no plans to re-develop the Rowhill site for housing.

Views of the Governing Body

12. (1) The Governing Body of Rowhill is supportive of the proposal and has approved the plans for the enlarged building in Longfield.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre are KCC PRUs and do not have governing bodies.

(3) The Governing Body of Raynehurst Primary School is supportive of the proposal.

Views of the Pupils

13. The headteacher of Rowhill Special School has kept the pupils and their parents informed through the school newsletter. The pupils are all looking forward to the relocation into new, more suitable accommodation.

Views of the Cluster Board

14. The Cluster board has been informed of the proposal and is fully supportive.

Views of the Area Education Officer

15. (1) Rowhill School will need to move site in order to accommodate the increase in the number of places for pupils with behaviour and learning difficulties, the Longfield site meets these criteria.

(2) There have been no objections raised in relation to Rowhill Special School, both moving site and enlarging the school from 96 to 120.

(3) Concerns have been raised in respect of placing both the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service on the same site, however, both units co-existed on the same site at Main Road, Longfield for 10 years, with minimal concerns from students, parents and carers.

(4) The most recent Ofsted Inspection of West Kent Health Needs Education Service criticised the accommodation, however, given its temporary nature, is not surprising. There is, therefore, increasing pressure on the Local Authority to provide suitable accommodation. I firmly believe this proposal meets those needs.

(5) I would propose that both headteachers, in conjunction with senior officers, begin to work together on a revised site plan to ensure the accommodation for both West Kent Health Needs Education Service and Phoenix Centre are distinct. In this way all of the concerns raised, would be allayed.

Transport, Admissions and Community Impact

16. (1) Rowhill Special School has the largest roll and is therefore the school that is most affected. In addition, most of the children are transported to the school by hired minibus or taxi. It is impossible to supply an exact breakdown of potential travel costs, as this would require a complete tender process to be done. The majority of Rowhill pupils come from the North West Kent area, specifically the Dartford and Gravesham areas. The pupils that travel from further afield (Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge, Maidstone or Rochester) might have slightly reduced transport costs. Overall, it is not envisaged that there will be a huge increase in transport costs for Rowhill pupils.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service is in a similar transport situation to Rowhill in that they take in pupils from all over West Kent, therefore the transportation issues and cost expectations are likely to be comparable.

(3) The Phoenix Centre has less reliance on local authority funded transport. Moving the centre to Dartford might make it considerably easier for pupils from Dartford.

(4) All three provisions will receive advice and support from the local authority to produce a new travel plan prior to the relocation.

(5) The distance between the two sites is five miles. Due to the special nature of all three provisions, admission issues are not a factor.

(6) On balance, although more remote, the Woodview site is more easily accessible for large numbers of hired local authority transport. The residents of Stock

Lane would benefit from the reduced amount of traffic in their area during school peak hours.

Resource Implications

Capital

17. (1) The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Fund. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement is £5,455k.

(2) The existing Rowhill site is of an acceptable standard. To ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose for the Phoenix Centre and the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, the local authority will allocate a further £80k. This funding will also come out of the Special School Review Fund.

(3) There are no capital receipts, as both sites will remain local authority use.

Revenue

(4) There are no anticipated immediate increases in revenue costs.

Human

(5) There are no anticipated immediate increases in staffing costs, however once the Rowhill School has been enlarged, there will be an increase in staffing. This will be met through the schools delegated budget.

Equality Issues

18. (1) Rowhill Special School, West Kent Health Needs Education and the Phoenix Centre provide an education service for pupils who cannot easily enter mainstream schooling.

(2) PLASC 2006 for Rowhill Special School records a low percentage of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(3) The Phoenix Centre has a low amount of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(4) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service has a fluctuating roll and ethnicity is primarily White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

School Improvement Implications

19. The schools have very specialised roles with a very small tranche of special needs children. Significant improvements to performance are difficult to quantify, although it is hoped that with purpose built facilities, the performance of all three provisions will show some improvement.

Proposed Timetable

20. It is proposed that building work will commence after a decision has been reached.

14 Nov 2007	SOAB
4 Dec 2007	Start of Consultation
18 Dec 2007	Public Meeting
14 Jan 2008	Close of Consultation
7 Feb 2008	SOAB
Feb 2008	Cabinet Member Decision
Feb 2008	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member
Apr 2008	End of Statutory Representation Period
	Enlargement work begins at Longfield site
Sep 2009	Rowhill opens on Longfield site
	The Phoenix Centre moves to Stock Lane
	West Kent Health Needs Education Service moves from Raynehurst to Stock Lane

Recommendation

21. The views of the Schools Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:
- (a)
 - (i) relocating and enlarging Rowhill Special School
 - (ii) relocating the West Kent Health Needs Education Service
 - (iii) relocating the Phoenix Centre PRU
 - (b) if agreed, the issuing of a public notice for (i), above, and
 - (c) subject to approval of the proposal following the end of the objection period, the resources necessary to implement the scheme being provided on the basis identified in this report.

Simon Webb
 Area Education Officer
 Dartford & Gravesham
 Resources
 Tel: 01732 525110

Colin Feltham
 Head of AEN & Resources
 Additional Educational Needs &
 01622 605729

The Local Members are Ann Allen and Bertie Bassam

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board 14 November
2007

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 14 November 2007

Subject: ROWHILL SCHOOL, WILMINGTON – PROPOSAL TO ENLARGE AND RELOCATE TO THE OLD WEST KENT HOSPITAL SCHOOL SITE AND RELOCATE THE WEST KENT HEALTH NEEDS EDUCATION SERVICE AND THE PHOENIX CENTRE ONTO THE ROWHILL SITE.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to relocate Rowhill School onto the old West Kent Hospital School site, enlarge Rowhill School to 120 places and relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service and The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site.

This report also asks for SOAB approval to initiate a Public Consultation on the proposal.

Introduction

1. (1) Rowhill School is a school for boys and girls aged five to sixteen years who have Behaviour and Learning (B & L) Difficulties. Attached as Appendix 1 is a map showing the current pupil distribution.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service (Formerly the West Kent Hospital School Service) is an education service provision run by Kent County Council for children who are unable to attend their home school because of illness.

(3) The Phoenix Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for 14–16 year old boys and girls excluded from mainstream schooling.

(4) The current site at Main Road, Longfield which currently holds the Phoenix centre, and prior to the fire, the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, was the site of the old Woodview School.

(5) The Milestone Special School Nursery provision which is sited separately to the Phoenix Centre and West Kent Health Needs Education Service, is to remain on site.

The Proposal

2. (1) To relocate Rowhill School to the old site of the West Kent Hospital School at Main Road, Longfield, Dartford (site plan attached as Appendix 2).

(2) To enlarge the school buildings to increase capacity from 96 places to 120 places.

(3) Relocate the West Kent Health Needs Education Service onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington (site plan attached as Appendix 3).

(4) Relocate The Phoenix Centre onto the old Rowhill site in Stock Lane, Wilmington (appendix 3).

Background and Accommodation Issues

3. (1) (a) Rowhill is a Special School, currently situated in Stock Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7BZ and is a member of the Dartford West Cluster. It was to be re-housed in new purpose built accommodation on the present site.
- (b) The local authority has endeavoured over the last 18 months to extend the Rowhill Special School footprint. However due to the restrictions placed on the school site by its Green Belt status, this has not proved possible. The local authority has therefore been active in seeking an alternative site appropriate to the needs of the school.
- (c) The current designated pupil number is 96 and they have 105 children on the roll, although this number fluctuates. There are three times as many boys as girls, and very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from areas of social deprivation.
- (d) Rowhill Special School was re-designated in September 2004 as a consequence of the outcome of the Special School review to provide for pupils with Behaviour and Learning difficulties from across the whole of West Kent. During the transition stage, the school's pupil numbers were planned to fall to 96 by 2008.
- (e) There has been considerable pressure on places for Behaviour and Learning (B & L) provision in the West Kent area. The local authority considers it more likely that the pressure will increase from its current designation and therefore seek this opportunity to increase the provision from 96 to 120 by relocating Rowhill School.
- (f) Rowhill Special School received its last Ofsted inspection on 20 January 2006. The report awarded the school the overall status of "Good" with two "Outstandings".
- (2) (a) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service at one time occupied a site adjacent to the Phoenix centre on Main Road, Longfield. The school buildings were severely damaged in a fire in November 2005 and the school was decamped in its entirety to Raynehurst Primary School site in Gravesham.
- (b) The provision may include education at home (home tuition), education at a base or education in hospital depending on the illness or needs of the child.
- (c) The current capacity is 40 on site and an undefined amount on home tuition. Currently they have 19 children on the roll, although due to the nature of the service they provide, this number fluctuates.

- (d) The building at Main Road has now been rebuilt. The rebuild was funded by the insurance settlement.
- (3) (a) The Phoenix Centre PRU currently occupies the Woodview Site, Main Road, Longfield. The Centre is currently using some of the newly rebuilt facilities.
- (b) The Centre has a capacity of 32 and also caters for a number of children on home tuition. Currently they have 22 children on the roll with 8 being tutored at home.
- (c) The Centre provides an education for children who have been excluded from mainstream education. The Centre will provide the education service for any exclusions that continue for more than the 6th day.
- (d) The Phoenix Centre received its last Ofsted inspection on 17 October 2006. The report was very positive and awarded the school the overall status of "Good".

Resource Implications

4. Capital

(1) The existing West Kent Hospital School site has been rebuilt but it is not sufficient to accommodate the Rowhill School and its enlargement. The funding to construct the buildings will come from within the existing Special School Review Fund. The estimated cost for the outfit and enlargement is £5,455k.

(2) The existing Rowhill site is of an acceptable standard. To ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose for the Phoenix Centre and the West Kent Health Needs Education Service, we will allocate a further £80k. This funding will also come out of the Special School Review Fund.

(3) There are no capital receipts, as both sites will remain in Children, Families and Education use.

Revenue

(4) There are no anticipated immediate increases in revenue costs.

Human

(5) There are no anticipated immediate increases in staffing costs, however once the Rowhill School has been enlarged, there will be an increase in staffing. This will be met through the schools delegated budget.

Views of the Governing Body

5. (1) The Governing Body of Rowhill is supportive of the proposal and has approved the plans for the enlarged building in Longfield.

(2) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service and the Phoenix Centre are KCC PRUs and do not have governing bodies.

(3) The Governing Body of Raynehurst Primary School is supportive of the proposal.

Views of Local Member(s)

6. (1) The Local Member of the ward where the school is currently sited is Mrs Ann Allen. Cllr Allen has been informed of the proposal. No response has yet been received.

(2) The Local Member of the ward where it is proposed to re-site the school is Mr Bertie Bassam. Cllr Bassam has been informed of the proposal. No response has yet been received.

Views of the Health Authority

7. The Health Authority has not yet been consulted. There will of course be extensive dialogue during the consultation period to ensure that the level of provision at the school and PRUs is sufficient.

Equality Issues

8. (1) Rowhill and West Kent Health Needs Education Service are special schools that provide a service for pupils who cannot easily enter mainstream education.

(2) PLASC 2006 for Rowhill records a low percentage of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(3) The Phoenix Centre has a low amount of pupils with an ethnicity that is not White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

(4) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service has a fluctuating roll and ethnicity is primarily White English or Other White British. *Assessment: Low.*

Views of Cluster Board

9. The Cluster board has been informed of the proposal and are supportive.

Views of District Council

10. Dartford Borough Council has not yet been informed of the proposal, but will be fully informed if the proposal does go out to public consultation.

Views of the Area Education Officer

11. I fully support this proposal. It provides a robust and cost effective solution to some of the location and capacity issues facing two schools and two PRUs.

School Improvement Implications

12. The schools have very specialised roles with a very small tranche of special needs children. Significant improvements to performance are difficult to quantify, although it is hoped that with purpose built facilities, the performance of all three provisions will show some improvement.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

13. (1) (a) Rowhill has the largest roll and is therefore the school that is most affected. In addition, most of the children are transported to the school by hired minibus or taxi. It is impossible to supply an exact breakdown of potential travel costs, as this would require a complete tender process to be done.
- (b) The breakdown of location at Appendix 4, shows that the majority of pupils come from the North West Kent area, specifically the Dartford and Gravesham areas. The pupils that travel from further afield (Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Edenbridge, Maidstone or Rochester) might have slightly reduced transport costs.
- (c) Overall, it is not envisaged that there will be a huge increase in transport costs for Rowhill pupils.
- (2) (a) The West Kent Health Needs Education Service is in a similar transport situation to Rowhill in that they take in pupils from all over West Kent.
- (b) Therefore the transportation issues and cost expectations are likely to be similar.
- (3) The Phoenix Centre has less reliance on KCC funded transport. Moving the centre to Dartford might make it considerably easier for pupils from Dartford.
- (4) All three provisions will receive advice and support from KCC to produce a new travel plan prior to the relocation.
- (5) The distance between the two sites is five miles. Due to the special nature of all three provisions admission issues are not a factor.
- (6) On balance, although more remote, the Woodview site is more easily accessible for large numbers of hired KCC transport. The residents of Stock Lane would benefit from the reduced amount of traffic in their area during schools peak hours.

Links to the School Organisation Plan

14. This proposal is consistent with the aims, principles, policies and priorities within the School Organisation Plan.

Proposed Timetable

15. It is proposed that building work will commence after a decision has been reached.

Nov 2007	SOAB
Dec 2007	Start of Consultation
Dec 2007	Public Meeting
Jan 2008	Close of Consultation
Feb 2008	SOAB
Feb 2008	Cabinet Member Decision
Feb 2008	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member
Apr 2008	End of Statutory Representation Period
	Enlargement work begins at Longfield site
Sep 2009	Rowhill opens on Longfield site
	The Phoenix Centre moves to Stock Lane
	West Kent Health Needs Education Service decamps from Raynehurst and moves to Stock Lane

Recommendation

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on going out to public consultation:

- (a) to approve in principle the enlargement of Rowhill Special School to it's pre-2004 size;
- (b) to approve in principle the relocation of Rowhill Special School to the West Kent Hospital Site on Main Road Longfield;
- (c) to approve in principle the relocation of The Phoenix Centre to the Stock Lane site; and
- (d) to approve in principle the relocation of The West Kent Health Needs Education Service to the Stock Lane site.

Simon Webb
Area Education Officer
Dartford & Gravesham
Tel: 01732 525110

Colin Feltham
Head of AEN & Resources
Additional Educational Needs &
Resources
Tel: 01622 605729

The Local Members are Ann Allen and Bertie Bassam

Background documents:

None

Appendix 4

Table showing the home locations of Rowhill School Pupils

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Dartford	27
Gravesend	23
Swanley	10
Swanscombe	9
Tunbridge Wells	8
Tonbridge	7
Greenhithe	4
Longfield	2
Sevenoaks	2
Snodland	1
Rochester	1
Maidstone	1
Edenbridge	1
Cranbrook	1

PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE AND ENLARGE ROWHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL AND TO RELOCATE THE WEST KENT HEALTH NEEDS EDUCATION SERVICE AND THE PHOENIX CENTRE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents distributed: 800
 Responses received: 46

	Support	Against	Total
Parents/Carers of pupils at Rowhill Special School	15	1	12
Members of staff at Rowhill Special School	10		10
Governors of at Rowhill Special School	3		3
Parents/Carers of pupils at WKHNES			
Members of staff at WKHNES		4	4
Parents/Carers of pupils at the Phoenix Centre			
Members of staff at the Phoenix Centre			
Local members	2		2
Members of staff at other schools	4	2	6
Interested parties		3	3
Local resident		2	2
Total	34	12	46

In support of the proposal

- This is another piece of the Special School Review.
- This will address the increasing demand for specialist places.
- Schools pressured to keep pupils in because of the need to reduce exclusions. If there were more places available, it would reduce exclusions even further.
- The sooner the better for Dartford and Gravesham districts.
- This is a sensible use of resources and a good idea for all concerned.
- It will result in easier access to facilities.
- Existing premises at Rowhill not adequate and we need to be able to offer more space.
- Moving will have no effect on the Longfield community.
- The governing body considers the proposal to be the best option for all the staff and pupils at Rowhill and the two PRUs.
- A welcome proposal as long as the long term provision of the services provided by the WKHNES and Phoenix can be assured on the Wilmington site.
- The proposed relocation will continue the welcome presence of education facilities in the area and retain an important link with the community.

Against the proposal

- WKHNES needs separate base with no shared facilities.
- Severe social vulnerability could jeopardise the recovery and attendance of WKHNES pupils.
- Very vulnerable pupils and could not cope with being on the same site as EBD and excluded pupils.
- Rowhill and Phoenix students appear to be rather boisterous, and on many occasions, physical and loud.
- Attempting to integrate WKHNES pupils with others with severe behavioural problems can only have a detrimental effect on success rate.

- Increased volume of traffic at Woodview site.
- The relocation of WKHNES is taking too long.
- Accommodation is entirely unsuitable. Ofsted stated that the WKHNES needed suitable accommodation now.
- Stock Lane residents might benefit, but what about the residents of New Barn and Longfield? Have local residents been consulted?
- Why unsettle everyone so soon after the fire?
- Very short notice for the public consultation.
- No car parking for visitors and not enough for staff.
- Have alternatives been considered? Suggest splitting Rowhill into two local schools, saving time and money. Re-invest £5.5m money on new facility in SW Kent.
- Consider using part of the redundant Birchwood site in Swanley as a site for an enlarged Rowhill.
- Behavioural and Medical PRUs should not be sharing the same site according to the "Access to Education" document.
- £8000 nowhere near enough for refurbishment.

**PROPOSED RELOCATION AND ENLARGEMENT OF ROWHILL SPECIAL SCHOOL
AND RELOCATION OF THE WKHNES AND PHOENIX CENTRE**

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 18 December 2007 at Rowhill School

Approximately 20 people attended the public meeting including the headteachers, staff and governors of Rowhill School and the West Kent Hospital Needs Education Service.

The major points raised and responses given were as follows: -

- The Area Education Officer set out the case for the relocation of Rowhill School to the site of the former WKHNES site in Longfield. This would enable the school to be expanded from 96 to 120 places and allow the WKHNES and Phoenix Centre to move into the Rowhill site which would be adapted to suit the needs of such pupils.
- The Headteacher of Rowhill explained that he and the governing body fully supported the proposal which would provide an excellent fully purpose built and expanded school for pupils with Behaviour and Learning difficulties in the area.
- Dartford Borough Council ward members for Wilmington stated they were pleased that there were no plans to re-develop the Rowhill site for housing. They sought assurances that there were no plans to close the Barn Centre and move pupils to the Rowhill site and also sought clarification on traffic related issues. The Area Education Officer assured them that there were no current plans to close Barn End. It is also believed there is a retainer on that site preventing its sale and use for housing development.
- Clarification was sought as to the number of pupils who would be educated on the Rowhill site and whether this would result in surplus capacity. It was explained that whilst Rowhill had a current capacity for 96 pupils, this did not mean that it would have such a capacity for pupils from the Phoenix Centre and WKHNES. In fact there would undoubtedly be less pupils educated on the site due to the nature of their needs.
- A member of staff of the WKHNES highlighted her concerns about the service being co-located with the Phoenix Centre again, highlighting that this had not been appropriate previously with some incidents of bullying taking place. In addition, the move to Rowhill would result in longer journeys for pupils from South West Kent. The AEO responded that ideally the two education provisions would not be co-located but KCC is constrained by capital costs and more effective management of the site will be explored to minimise incidents in the future.
- How would the change of use affect traffic movements in Wilmington? Will there be a need to stagger times of the WKHNES and Phoenix Centre? The AEO responded that staggering should not be necessary and that before they open, both provisions will have to have completed a School Travel Plan which will explore traffic management issues in detail. Overall the changes at the Rowhill site are likely to result in less vehicle movements.
- There were concerns about lack of publicity of the proposal and the local councillors agreed to take away proposal documents away and assist to increase local knowledge of the plans for Rowhill School.