

By:	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Education Cabinet Committee – 21 June 2013
Subject	Decision number: 13/00044 Governing Body proposal to close St Philip Howard Catholic (Aided) Primary School
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report sets out for consideration the responses to the public notice period recently closed for the proposal published by the Governing Body of St Philip Howard Catholic Primary School to discontinue the school with effect from 31 August 2013.
Recommendation	The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the outcome of the Statutory Public Notice; (ii) Comment, endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to agree that the Governing Body of St Philip Howard Catholic Primary School should implement the closure of the school.
Future Pathway of Paper	Cabinet Member decision
Electoral Division	Herne Bay

1. Introduction

- 1.1 St. Philip Howard Catholic Primary School is a 1FE Aided primary school in Herne Bay. The majority of pupils come from Herne Bay and around 50% of pupils are Catholic. At the start of the consultation the number of pupils on roll was 91 (now 34) with 10 pupils in Year 6 who will be moving into secondary education in September 2013 and 5 first preferences (9 second preferences) for Year R in September 2013. The school is on the government list for Priority School Building funding but this has been at risk from the start due to the lack of sustainability arising from the low number of current and projected pupils.
- 1.2 The school has faced immense difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff and has experienced high levels of pupil turnover. The school went into Special Measures following inspection in May 2012. Working with the Diocese of Southwark, an Executive Headteacher and Head of School (seconded) were secured and the school has had extensive support from the Local Authority.
- 1.3 The three most recent HMI visits have reported reasonable progress and positive developments in the school's teaching environment due to financial support from the LA and the efforts of the Executive Headteacher and Head of School.
- 1.4 The school is projecting a budget deficit of £36,000 with further demands on the budget due to infrastructure needs.
- 1.5 At the start of the year several meetings took place with the Diocese and school to review the position of St Philip Howard Primary. At a meeting on the 12 February which included the Chair of Governors, Executive Headteacher and

Head of School, it was clear to all parties that the future of the school was not sustainable - despite many permutations that were put forward and considered.

2. Public Consultation

- 2.1 The Governing Body of St. Phillip Howard met on the 25 February and voted on a resolution to consult on closure of the school. A paper was taken to the 19 March Education Cabinet Committee.

The consultation timetable:

Consultation Period	11 March to 26 April 2013
Public Meeting Date	20 March 2013
Governing Body decision to issue a Public Notice	29 April 2013
Public Notice period	2 May to 14 June 2013
ECC following the Public Notice period re recommendation for closure	21 June 2013
Cabinet Member decision on closure	26 June 2013
Appeal period	26 June to 24 July 2013
Implementation	31 August 2013

- 2.2 As part of the consultations, meetings were held with a range of people including members of the governing body and staff employed at the school. Principally, a meeting with staff and union representation took place on 12 March 2013, a meeting for current parents (approx. 30 in attendance) was held on 13 March and a public meeting (approx. 30 in attendance) was held at St Philip Howard School on 20 March 2013.
- 2.3 The majority of responses at the parents' meeting on 13 March centred on the particular needs of individual children and, as such, did not focus on the proposal to close the school. Some disappointment was expressed that the closure is proposed despite the academic improvements experienced over the last year and at the loss of a community asset. The views expressed at these meetings and in the written responses were taken into account at a meeting of the governors on 29 April 2013 where the decision was made to issue the public notice.
- 2.4 Three written responses were received; two disagreed with the proposal but 'accepted' it and the other one was of a purely technical nature regarding clarification on the consultation process.

3. Local Authority Support

- 3.1 The Local Authority has been working with the school, the Diocese and Herne Bay and Whitstable primary schools to ensure that all children are provided with places in other schools and that siblings are placed together.

4. Responses to the Statutory Public Notice

- 4.1 At the time of print no comments or statutory objections to the notice had been received.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out at the start of this consultation and is available via the following link:
<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/StPhilipHoward/consultationHome>

- 5.2 The conclusion following the public consultation is that the presumptions made in the initial assessment still remain and that it is not necessary to initiate a further Equality Impact Assessment.

6. Recommendations

Education Cabinet Committee is asked to

- (i) Note the outcomes of the statutory public notice;
- (ii) Comment, endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to agree that the Governing Body of St Philip Howard Catholic Primary School should implement the closure of the school.

7. Background Documents

COMMISSIONING PLAN FOR EDUCATION PROVISION 2012-17

<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/s34295/FINAL%20VERSION%20Kent%20Comm%20Plan%20Ed%20Prov%202012-17%20attached%20to%20WEB%20SITE%2020%20SEPT.pdf>

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<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s38873/Item%20C4%20St%20Philip%20Howard%20RC%20Primary%20School%20Herne%20Bay.pdf>

The public consultation document is available via the following link:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/StPhilipHoward/consultationHome>

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