

**Proposal to discontinue Furness School**

**Summary of written responses**

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: 100  
Responses received: 50

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers	0	5	0	5
Students	0	10	1	11
Members of Staff	0	18	0	18
Member of Staff at another school	0	3	0	3
Local residents	0	8	0	8
Governors	0	0	0	0
Other	0	4	1	5
Total	0	48	2	50

Following the closure of the consultation period, 50 responses were received. The responses received are summarised below. 293 signatures were presented on three petitions, all opposing the proposal. The petitions are at Appendix 4

**Summary of Responses**

- The proposal to close Furness School is shocking and is a result of four years of mismanagement by KCC.
- No surprise that at the end of the financial year, the school had a deficit.
- There surely is a clear view that numbers will continue to grow.
- Numbers not increasing due to Lilac Sky and Kent County Council.
- Additional funds could be generated by offering school facilities for hire.
- I absolutely love this school and will hate it if you shut it down.
- Please do not shut our school its brilliant.
- Furness is a fantastic place we are like a family.
- I am proud to call myself a student at Furness and I am proud to call it my home!
- I know you will suggest putting pupils in to mainstream but it won't work.
- I came to this school because I needed help with my education and when I did get it I felt a glimmer of hope.
- I don't think I could carry on my with my life if the school closed.
- Most of my working life was at Furness and this is an emotional time for me.
- Please don't sell the land for development.
- Dismayed and saddened to hear about the proposed closure of Furness School.
- It seems contradictory that such a school should be closed instead of attempting to return it to its past standards.
- I used to be scared to go to school because I get bullied in my other school.

- Since I have been here, my handwriting has improved tremendously.
- This school has really saved my life and education.
- Outstanding school for Autistic children.
- There is no good publicity on how the school has turned itself around.
- Furness School has changed my son's life.
- Teachers and pupils get along as a family and one unit.
- We are showing improvements on all sorts of levels.
- I never had real friends before here.
- Why has nothing been done to rebrand the school?
- Furness is more than just a school.
- There is NO provision like it.
- I understand the issues for closing the school are financial but it has only been an ASD school since 2014 and needs more time to increase our numbers.
- From the minutes I have available, this is the first mention of any significant financial issues, all the way back in October 2012.
- I actually find it quite concerning that the IEB and Lilac Sky were seemingly discussing "a give up plan" at this very early stage.
- As the LA would pay the deficit back then, why can't the same thing happen NOW?
- The relationship between the IEB, Lilac Sky and the KCC has clearly been quite a difficult one at times, with obvious financial challenges, clear periods of perceived lack of interest and feedback along with significant and alarming conflicts of interest between all the parties.
- It seems like this was a disaster waiting to happen and the innocent victim here is the school.
- This school helped me get to where I am now.
- I enjoy coming to this school because they are very supportive.
- If you close this school, you will accomplish nothing.
- Furness School should be considered an integral part of Hextable
- I feel safe and happy at Furness.
- I used to be angry all the time, but not since I have been at Furness.
- There is clearly a desire by local parents to send their children to Furness.
- Kent County Council should write off the current deficit.
- Furness has exemplary facilities due to the rebuild in 2007.
- I find it unbelievable that some pupils have also been offered a return to the original setting where they failed.
- Lilac Sky clearly did not value the pupils involved.
- Many pupils at Furness have not had an easy journey through education.
- Parents have finally believed they have found a safe haven.
- I work with the parents of our pupils on a daily basis. There are none that would want their children to be at a mainstream unit.
- A high percentage of pupils who have looked at the school have chosen Furness.
- Is the decision to pay Lilac Sky to manage the school, made by KCC, at part fault for the deficit?
- A consultation should not be a foregone conclusion.
- There is a great deficit of specialist school places in Kent.

- Standard 20 visits of boarding, which are held six times a year, provide powerful evidence that boarding is offering high-quality care, safety and great outcomes for current ASD pupils.
- It is clearly unrealistic to expect a boys EBD school to re-designate to a co-ed ASD school within five months.
- In January of this year, pupils who wanted to come to Furness were refused by the LEA.
- Parents do not want their ASD child educated in a mainstream school with a unit attached.
- Current ASD pupils have come to the school because units in mainstream schools have not met their needs.
- The proposal omits the huge potential to generate income, maximise assets, etc.
- Why was deficit allowed to build up and spending continue without any warning from KCC/IEB? Who is responsible for budget deficit? How much of the deficit is attributable to Lilac Sky. Is Lilac Sky fee part of the deficit?
- KCC offered no support, rebranding, training or positive publicity for re-designation.
- ASD children in NW Kent now left vulnerable.
- How can it make sense to send pupils out of county or to private schools at huge cost to KCC?
- When budget allocation changed to 'bums on seats' why did KCC allow no new admissions for over a year?
- Why were parents/pupils who visited Furness for YR 7 this coming September told by their local authority that they could not come to Furness, forcing them to look elsewhere?
- Is five months a realistic time frame to allow a newly re-designated school to pick up on numbers?
- The implications of moving our children to an 'alternative provision' are unthinkable.
- I feel the school has been thoroughly let down by Kent County Council.
- The statement 'parents of high functioning children with ASD are ambitious for their children and would like them to be supported in mainstream schools' incomprehensible.
- I really cannot put into words just how special Furness is.
- We have evidence following a meeting with an MP that the decision to close Furness was made a while ago.
- Children/parents do not want mainstream units where it is proven they cannot cope.
- How much was Lilac Sky's fee?
- Is there not a huge cost to KCC in sending pupils to private schools.