

Notice of Meeting

Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning Decisions



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Date & time

Wednesday, 15
January 2014 at
2.30 pm

Place

Room 107 - County
Hall, Kingston-upon-
Thames, KT1 2DN

Contact

Anne Gowing
Room 122, County Hall
Tel 020 8541 9938
anne.gowing@surreycc.gov.uk

Chief Executive

David McNulty

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This meeting will be held in public. If you would like to attend and you have any special requirements, please contact Anne Gowing on 020 8541 9938.

Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning
Mrs Linda Kemeny

AGENDA

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2a Members' Questions

The deadline for Member's questions is 12pm four working days before the meeting (9 January 2014).

2b Public Questions

The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting (8 January 2014).

2c Petitions

Notice of a petition, "*We the undersigned petition Surrey County Council to open a new secondary school in Thames Ditton*", containing 205 signatures has been received from Ms Louise McDonagh, Thames Ditton. A response will be presented at the meeting.

3 PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE HYTHE PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM 1 TO 2 FORMS OF ENTRY (Pages 1 - 6)

As with other areas of the county, there is increasing pressure for primary school places in Runnymede. In addition to the demand generated by an increasing birth rate, there is a need to provide more school places in the Borough of Runnymede as a result of additional housing and net inward migration. The Local Authority has recently consulted and published statutory notices on the proposed expansion of The Hythe Primary School in partnership with the Governing Body of the school.

4 EXPANSION OF LYNE AND LONGCROSS CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT SCHOOL FROM A ONE FORM ENTRY INFANT SCHOOL TO A ONE FORM ENTRY PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM SEPTEMBER 2015 (Pages 7 - 12)

There is increasing pressure for primary school places in Runnymede. In addition to the demand generated by an increasing birth rate, there is a need to provide more school places in the Borough as a result of additional housing and net inward migration. The Governing Body of Lyne and Longcross Church of England Infant School has recently consulted on the proposed expansion of the school to a primary school from September 2015 and determined to publish statutory notices on their intention to proceed with the proposal. It is for the Cabinet Member to consider any representations to the notices before a final decision is made.

5 FINAL DETERMINATION OF A PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE SPECIALIST CENTRE FOR SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION AT THE ECHELFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ASHFORD (Pages 13 - 18)

Following a statutory consultation process and public Notices issued by Surrey County Council, the Cabinet Member is asked to make a decision

on the proposed closure of the Specialist Centre at The Echelford Primary School.

David McNulty
Chief Executive
6 January 2014

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SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

DATE: WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2014

LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

SUBJECT: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE HYTHE PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM 1 TO 2 FORMS OF ENTRY



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

As with other areas of the county, there is increasing pressure for primary school places in Runnymede. In addition to the demand generated by an increasing birth rate, there is a need to provide more school places in the Borough of Runnymede as a result of additional housing and net inward migration. The Local Authority has recently consulted and published statutory notices on the proposed expansion of The Hythe Primary School in partnership with the Governing Body of the school.

The Cabinet Member must now determine whether to implement the proposals as set out in the notices.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning approve to implement the proposal to expand the school as set out in the statutory notices.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in Surrey. Expansions have recently been commissioned at a number of primary schools in Runnymede including Darley Dene Infant School, Trumps Green Infant School, St Ann's Heath Junior School and Thorpe Church of England Infant School. Even with these additional places, most primary schools in Runnymede are expected to be full and to continue to be full in the future with more schools places needed. Pupil mapping data indicates that there are large number of pupils living within the Egham and Hythe area and that further reception places will be required to keep up with demand.

DETAILS:

The Proposal

1. Surrey County Council, in partnership with the Governors of The Hythe Primary School is proposing that the school expands from a one form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 30 (total capacity of 210 pupils), to a two form entry primary school with a Published Admission Number of 60 (total capacity of 420 pupils). An extension to the existing building will bring the teaching accommodation up to the required standard in order for this change to happen. It is envisaged that the expansion will be complete by September 2015.

Rationale

2. Demand for school places – There are a number of different factors that can affect the demand for school places in an area. The most important is the birth and fertility rates in an area. Based on figures provided by the Office for National Statistics, births in Runnymede dipped from 1996 to a low point in 2001 with just over 800 births per academic year. This rose a little before flattening out until 2005. Births have risen since 2006 to just under a 1000 per academic year. Over the last two years the number of applications for a place in a reception class at primary schools in Runnymede have increased by over 140. It should be noted that the recent increases in applications are unlikely to be the result of the number of births alone. There are other factors such as additional pupils from housing growth, inward and outward migration, parental preferences and the changing percentage of parents applying for independent or private provision - all of which can affect the number of applications in any given year making application yields difficult to model.
3. Although the school count data is not currently available for 2013, it is clear from the number of applications that have been accepted that the projections underestimated demand in Runnymede in 2013 for reception places. As the projections are trend based (usually over three years) any uplift in applications can take some time to work through the model. It is therefore likely that future demand in 2014 and 2015 will be underestimated as well. On the basis of this the Local Authority is preparing to provide a minimum of two additional forms of entry in the Borough by 2015. The project at the Hythe will provide one of these forms of entry.
4. Housing development in the Borough - Runnymede Borough Council is responsible for housing. They are in the process of consulting on their core strategy which will, among other things, identify how many additional homes may be provided in the Borough in the future. Targets range from a minimum of circa 2400 to a high of 4500 additional dwellings in the Borough by 2026. How many additional dwellings are actually provided will depend on the availability and suitability of land in the Borough. Although the number of houses and the timeframes for when development will take place are not yet certain, it should be noted that all primary schools in the Borough are currently near capacity already. It is therefore important to build capacity now and in the future.
5. Parental Preferences - the Local Authority has a duty to secure diversity in the provision of schools and to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of schools. The Hythe Primary School is a popular school being oversubscribed in both 2012 and 2013. This proposal therefore meets parental preferences.
6. Location of pupils – Parental preference is important, but the Local Authority is mindful that popularity can be transient and that additional provision, where possible, should be located as local to the demand as possible. Surrey County Council believes that local schools should serve their local communities. Pupil mapping exercises have demonstrated that the Hythe Primary School is in good proximity to a large pupil population in the Borough which should enable as many parents to walk to school as possible. For example, if every child that applied for a place in 2013 went to their local school then 189 pupils will have been placed at schools in the Egham and Thorpe planning area where the Hythe is located. There are currently only

120 places available at reception in the schools in this area indicating that from a spatial point of view this area is currently underserved.

CONSULTATION:

7. Public consultation was undertaken on this proposal at the start of the academic year. A consultation document was published to all statutory stakeholders including parents and local residents were informed. The document was published on 5 September 2013 with consultation responses required by 11 October 2013. In addition to this, two public meetings were held at the school on 12 September 2013. This was an opportunity for parents, pupils, school staff and local residents to learn in a bit more detail what the proposals are and to ask questions to the school and the Local Authority.
8. The results of the public consultation was summarised in the previous report to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning on 13 November 2013.
9. Since the publication of notices there have been no formal representations on this proposal.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

10. Surrey County Council will be delivering and managing this project. The in house project management team will have compiled a project risk register and will monitor and update this document at regular intervals. The Hythe Primary School is on a tight site with difficult access arrangements. The preferred option is to extend the existing building in order to coherently suite classrooms into year groups separated by a central corridor. This is a more complicated delivery method than constructing a new stand alone building. It will be important that the school, contractor and Surrey County Council project manage work closely together to manage the risks in this regard to ensure the site is safe, the compound and access points are sensible and that pupil safety is paramount.
11. Other risks relate to the capital budget and programme for the scheme. A full planning application has not yet been submitted so it is not yet clear what mitigation measures might be necessary in terms of local amenity and traffic, as well as the capital budgets that might be required for their implementation. This risk will be managed by ensuring a contingency sum is budgeted as part of this project. In terms of timescales, September 2015 is considered achievable and there is some allowance in the programme for delays with the planning application or during the construction phase.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

12. This scheme is included within the 2013/18 Medium Term Financial Plan. A more detailed business case will be developed prior to contract tender.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

13. The section 151 officer confirms that this scheme is in the 2013/18 medium term financial plan. The detailed financial and business implications will be considered as part of the business case.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

14. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local education authorities to secure that efficient primary education is available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 5 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 places a duty to promote high standards. Therefore, there is a duty to provide efficient education and sufficient schools to do so.

Equalities and Diversity

15. A full equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken on this proposal as it is unlikely that the proposal would have a negative impact on any groups with protected characteristics. The school does serve both traveller families and families from the armed services but this proposal ensures that there will be sufficient places for children from these groups to attend the school in the future. The proposal does not change the nature of the admissions criteria for the school.
16. The new school building will comply with all DDA (Disabilities Discrimination Act) regulations. The expanded school will provide additional employment opportunities in the area.
17. The school will be for children in the community served by the school. If there is sufficient provision available, then it would be beneficial for all children, including vulnerable children.
18. The school will be expected to contribute towards community cohesion and will be expected to provide the normal range of before and after schools clubs as are provided in a typical Surrey County Council school.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

19. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. The new buildings will comply or exceed Building Regulations. The contractor will be required to provide a Site Waste Management Plan.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

20. If there is a decision to proceed to implement the proposal, a planning application will be prepared and a full business case that will be considered by Cabinet prior to tendering for a contractor to undertake the works.

Contact Officer:

Kieran Holliday, School Commissioning Officer (North West), 020 8541 7383

Consulted:

All schools in Runnymede
 Pupils and parents of The Hythe Primary School
 The Governing Body of the Hythe Primary School
 Local Residents
 Local Members

Sources/background papers:

- Proposal to expand The Hythe Primary School by one form of entry by 2015. A copy of this report can be found here on the SCC website by navigating to, or clicking on, the following: [Learning > Schools > Education Consultation and Plans](#)
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SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****DATE: WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2015****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF LYNE AND LONGCROSS CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT SCHOOL FROM A ONE FORM ENTRY INFANT SCHOOL TO A ONE FORM ENTRY PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM SEPTEMBER 2015****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

There is increasing pressure for primary school places in Runnymede. In addition to the demand generated by an increasing birth rate, there is a need to provide more school places in the Borough as a result of additional housing and net inward migration. The Governing Body of Lyne and Longcross Church of England Infant School has recently consulted on the proposed expansion of the school to a primary school from September 2015 and determined to publish statutory notices on their intention to proceed with the proposal. It is for the Cabinet Member to consider any representations to the notices before a final decision is made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning approve to implement the proposal to expand the school as set out in the statutory notices.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in Surrey. Demand for school places has increased significantly in Runnymede in recent years and the Local Authority has commissioned projects at a number of primary schools to provide more places (Trumps Green Infant School, St Ann's Heath Junior School, Darley Dene Primary School, Thorpe Church of England Primary School, and the Hythe Primary School).

Even with these additional places, most primary schools in Runnymede are expected to be full and continue to be full in the future. There is a need for more junior places in the area and this is an opportunity to create primary provision through a basic need project – a stated strategic policy of the Local Authority.

DETAILS:**The Proposal**

1. Governors of Lyne and Longcross Infant School, in partnership with Surrey County Council and the Diocese of Guildford, have proposed to expand the school from a 1-form entry infant school (capacity of 90 pupils) to a 1 form entry primary school (capacity of 210 pupils) from September 2015.

2. Alongside this proposal, the Local Authority is also consulting on a proposal to establish a formal feeder link between Meadowcroft Infant School and St Ann's Heath Junior School from September 2015 as part of the normal admissions consultation starting in November 2013. This proposal is mentioned in this document because the organisational change above is complemented by this associated proposal given that Lyne and Longcross pupils would ordinarily feed into St Ann's Heath Junior School.

Rationale

3. Demand for school places – Births per school year have increased in the Borough of Runnymede to just under a 1000 a year from a low of 814 in 2001. This increase is now reflected in the additional demand for school places in the Borough. Whilst the increase in births goes some way to explaining the recent increases in applications, it is unlikely to be the sole factor. Additional pupils from housing growth, inward and outward migration, parental preferences and the changing percentage of parents applying for independent or private provision will all affect the number of applications in any given year which can make projecting levels of demand difficult to model. Whilst the scale of demand can be difficult to judge with precision the Local Authority is of the view that the general upward trend in demand in the Borough is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. This proposal provides more school places and will help address this demand.
4. Additional Housing - The level of housing in the Borough will have an important impact on the demand for school places in the future. Runnymede Borough Council is responsible for housing. They are in the process of consulting on their core strategy and Local Plan which will, among other things, identify how many additional homes may be provided in the Borough in the future. Targets range from a minimum of circa 2400 to a high of 4500 additional dwellings in the Borough by 2028. How many additional dwellings are actually provided will depend on the availability and suitability of land in the Borough. Based on the housing forecasts provided by the Borough Council additional demand has been profiled into the County Council's projections below.
5. Creating Primary Provision – Whenever there is a case to invest capital into school to meet basic need, the Local Authority will always consider opportunities to create primary provision. Primary Schools (rather than separate infant and junior provision) is the Local Authority's preferred model for education. Given the need for additional junior places there is an opportunity to create primary provision at Lyne and Longcross. The school is rated by Ofsted as a 'good' infant school but the Local Authority believes that it can continue to become 'outstanding' as a primary school for the following reasons:
 - Seamless transition from Key Stage 1 (infant) to Key Stage 2 (Junior)
 - Improved pupil tracking and assessment
 - Greater opportunities for curriculum development through greater resources
 - Better opportunities for staff continuing professional development (CPD)
 - Better recruitment and retention of quality staff
 - Financially more viable as a bigger school
6. Parental Preferences - the Local Authority has a duty to secure diversity in the provision of schools and to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of schools. Lyne and Longcross is a popular

school rated 'Good' by Ofsted. This proposal creates more Church of England places in the area cited as a positive factor in the recent consultation.

- 7. Travel and Transport - There is currently a lot of traffic movement between infant and junior schools in Surrey as parents pick up and drop off pupils at separate sites. Although primary provision will reduce car journeys in the area, as parents would no longer need to drop children off at separate sites. This is a more sustainable pattern of provision in the area in line with SCC policy.

CONSULTATION:

- 8. Public consultation was undertaken on this proposal between 3 October 2013 and 6 November 2013. A consultation document was published to all statutory stakeholders including parents and local residents. A public meeting was held for parents, residents and other interested parties on 14 October. This meeting looked at the educational case for the proposal. There was also discussion with local residents and parents on the impact the proposal would have in terms of traffic, parking and local amenity issues though it was recognised that planning issues are subject to separate consultation organised by the Planning Authority.

- 9. There were a total of 45 responses to the consultation. This includes all written responses either through a response form or in email format. A breakdown of responses is given below. The totals do not add up to 45 because some respondents have multiple interests (e.g. local residents that are also parents of children at the school).

Parent of child at Lyne and Longcross Infant School (Nursery) - 6
 Parent of child at Lyne and Longcross Infant School (main school) – 17
 Parent of child at Meadowcroft Infant School – 8
 Parent of child at another school or who may go to one of the schools - 6
 Member of staff (any school) – 13
 Governor (any school) – 5
 Local Resident / Other – 6

- 10. Given that there are collectively a number of pupils across the two schools which this proposal affects, the response rate was moderate but this is not untypical for consultation exercises of this nature and the public meeting was well attended. With this in mind, it is hard to say that the conclusions of the consultation provide a truly representative view of what people in the local community think, but all stakeholders have been given the opportunity to make their views known.

- 11. There were two questions in the consultation form and the responses for each are broken down below: and across all the responses the following results were recorded:

Question 1 - "More junior places are needed in the area"

Agree:	34
Disagree:	0
Don't know / no response:	11

Total	45
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Question 2 – “Lyne and Longcross should expand to become a primary school by September 2015”.

Agree:	41
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Disagree:	1
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Don't know / no response:	3
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Total	45
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12. Given the overall responses and the percentage of people in favour of the proposals there is little value in trying to breakdown the responses further (e.g. by respondent type or by school) to understand any differences between different groups because all groups essentially agree with the proposal. The one person that disagreed with the proposal is a parent who currently has a child at Lyne and Longcross and a sibling at St Ann's Heath Junior.
13. There were no schools that formally responded to the consultation. This reflects the level of informal consultation that has already taken place with all Head teachers and Chairs of Governors of primary schools in Runnymede prior to the publication of this consultation.
14. Analysis has been undertaken on the commentary received from consultees on the proposals. Not everyone provided additional commentary in their return and it is not possible to recognise each individual comment, however, the feedback received can be grouped into the following key themes and in the order of the total number of times they were mentioned (number of entries in brackets).
 - a. Need for more junior places in the area (34) – There was a high level of consensus amongst those that responded to the consultation that there is a need for more junior places in the local area.
 - b. Quality of school provision (15) – this was raised by parents from either Lyne and Longcross or Meadowcroft. With respect to Lyne parents they were pleased with the quality of provision at the school and wanted that to continue into Key Stage 2. In the case of Meadowcroft parents, they supported the associated proposal of a link into St Ann's Heath Junior School which they believe is a good school that they would want to attend in the future. Establishing the link between the two schools was seen as important to provide the infant school with more certainty over KS1/2 transition.
 - c. Traffic / parking concerns / child safety (8) – The main issue regarding the expansion is with respect to additional traffic, parking concerns and concerns over child safety (although child safety was cited to a lesser extent). This is both an issue for local residents as well as parents that will be travelling into the school. Some residents currently suffer from inconsiderate parking practices from parents and congestion during pick up and drop off hours. There were concerns raised about the availability of parking places in and around the school generally.

- d. Additional Church School places / Faith provision (6) – this was cited mainly by parents at Lyne and Longcross who supported the proposals because of the increased church places that would be created as a result of the proposal.
- 15. The remaining comments have not been categorised here as they were only mentioned by one to two comments each so could not be considered significant concerns / advantages raised by respondents. They include disruption due to building works, additional noise, traffic movements and lack of public transport, the length of time it would take to build the new buildings, child safety during construction works, impacts upon educational standards, transport issues and whether subsidised bus provision could be provided.
- 16. There were no written representations made following the publication of statutory notices.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

- 17. This project will be managed by the Diocese of Guildford. The Diocese and their consultants are experienced in capital projects on school sites and will maintain a project risk register which will be monitored and updated at regular intervals. Given the size of the site and the nature of the project (demolition and rebuild) there are risks to this project. A decant strategy has been prepared and the Diocese are working with the school to plan the works on the school site to reduce disruption to the school as much as is practicably possible.
- 18. Other risks relate to the capital budget and programme for the scheme. A full planning application has not yet been submitted so it is not yet clear what mitigation measures might be necessary in terms of local amenity and traffic as well as the capital budgets that might be required for their implementation. This risk will be managed by ensuring a contingency sum is budgeted as part of this project. In terms of timescales, September 2015 is considered achievable and there is some allowance in the programme for delays with the planning application or during the construction phase but the programme remains tight.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

- 19. The full financial and value for money implications will be considered as part of the full business case. Preliminary work has suggested that this is the most appropriate school to expand to satisfy the increasing demand in school places for this area.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

- 20. The Section 151 Officer confirms that this scheme is included in the current funded capital programme for school basic need.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

- 21. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local education authorities to secure that efficient primary education is available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 5 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 places a duty to promote high standards. Therefore, there is a duty to provide efficient education and sufficient schools to do so.

Equalities and Diversity

22. A full equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken on this proposal as it is unlikely that the proposal would have a negative impact on any groups with protected characteristics. The school does serve both traveller families and families from the armed services but this proposal ensures that there will be sufficient places for children from these groups to attend the school in the future. The proposal does not change the nature of the admissions criteria for the school.
23. The new school building will comply with all DDA (Disabilities Discrimination Act) regulations. The expanded school will provide additional employment opportunities in the area.
24. The school will be for children in the community served by the school. If there is sufficient provision available, then it would be beneficial for all children, including vulnerable children.
25. The school will be expected to contribute towards community cohesion and will be expected to provide the normal range of before and after schools clubs as are provided in a typical Surrey County Council school.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

26. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. The new buildings will comply or exceed Building Regulations. The contractor will be required to provide a Site Waste Management Plan.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

27. If there is a decision to proceed to implement the proposal, a planning application will be prepared and a full business case that will be considered by Cabinet prior to tendering for a contractor to undertake the works.

Contact Officer:

Kieran Holliday, School Commissioning Officer (North West), 020 8541 7383

Consulted:

All schools in Runnymede
 Pupils and parents of Lyne and Longcross Infant School
 The Governing Bodies Lyne and Longcross Infant School
 The Diocese of Guildford
 Local Residents
 Local Members

Sources/background papers:

Proposal to expand Lyne and Longcross Church of England Infant School can be found here on the SCC website by navigating to, or clicking on, the following:
[Learning > Schools > Education Consultation and Plans](#)

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****DATE: 15 JANUARY 2014****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES****SUBJECT: FINAL DETERMINATION OF A PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE SPECIALIST CENTRE FOR SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION AT THE ECHELDFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ASHFORD****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Following a statutory consultation process and public Notices issued by Surrey County Council, the Cabinet Member is asked to make a decision on the proposed closure of the Specialist Centre at The Echelford Primary School.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning gives due consideration to the proposed closure of the Specialist Speech, Language and Communications Needs (SLCN) Centre with effect from 31 January 2014

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Pending a final decision on the future of The Echelford Centre, and at the request of the Executive Head Teacher and Governing Body, there have been no admissions to the SLCN Centre since September 2013. Prior to this date there has been a legacy of unfilled places at the Centre. This is partly due to fewer SLCN pupils in Surrey requiring this sort of provision and partly due to operational difficulties. The Echelford School Governing Body has been unable to secure appropriate specialist teaching and leadership of the Centre after standards there were judged as being unsatisfactory by OFSTED. The proposed closure will enable the Executive Headteacher and Governing Body to concentrate on raising standards in the mainstream school which currently also requires special measures and has become an academy within the Lumen Learning Trust. More suitable and effective alternative provision has been identified for the six pupils formerly on roll at the Centre..

DETAILS:**Business Case**

1. The Echelford Primary School is currently in an OFSTED category of concern as it needs to improve the quality of its educational offer to all pupils. The Head of the SLCN Centre resigned in 2012 and the Head Teacher of the school resigned in the spring of 2013. An Executive Head Teacher from another successful Surrey school has been appointed to oversee the rapid improvements required and the school has become a sponsored academy.
2. The Executive Head has had great difficulty in recruiting suitable specialist staff for the SLCN Centre, including a Head of Centre; and the roll dwindled to

only six pupils, four of whom are transported there from Hounslow Local Authority. The Centre was opened in 2006 with twelve places available but it has never been full. There is another SLCN Centre in the Spelthorne Borough at Spelthorne School and so the opportunity to expand this type of provision is available locally should the numbers of pupils requiring this kind of support rise in the near future.

3. A consultation with stakeholders was held according to Department for Education (DfE) guidelines and this included a meeting at the school for parents and other interested parties. A number of individual meetings have also been held with parents of children attending the centre and with Special Educational Needs officers of Hounslow Local Authority. The County Council received no strong opposition to the proposed closure of the Centre. The Executive Head Teacher and the Governing Body of The Echelford School initially requested this closure and are in full support of this proposal.

CONSULTATION:

4. The consultation period ran from Monday 10 June 2013 for a period of six weeks up to Friday 26 July 2013. This was publicised to parents of the children on roll in the mainstream school as well as to the parents and carers of children on roll at the Centre. A consultation document was drawn up outlining the reasons for the proposal and what alternative arrangements would be made for pupils requiring this kind of provision. This was sent to all stakeholders.
5. A public meeting was held at The Echelford School on 19 June at 5.30 pm. This was attended by approximately ten parents. Only one written consultation response was received from a parent of a child in Year 1 at the mainstream school who was intending to apply for a place in the SLCN Centre in 2015 when he transferred to Key Stage 2. The parent expressed her disappointment at the proposal to close the Centre. Other than this, there was no other written opposition to the proposal.
6. There was a further six week period of consultation during the publication of Notices in November 2013 and no further responses were received.
7. Parents of the six children attending the Centre in the 2012/13 academic year had individual consultations with Surrey County Council SEN officers and with Hounslow Officers, where appropriate, about alternative provision for their children. They were generally satisfied with the proposed alternative arrangements and consequently their children's Statements were revised to name other provision which the pupils moved into at the start of the new school year in September 2013. The Centre is therefore now empty.
8. The six week period for the publication of Statutory Notices ends on 16 December 2013. There have been no additional responses to this Notice to date of the submission of this report (4 December) which is required to meet the County Council's deadlines. The School Commissioning Officer will verbally update the Cabinet Member on the position at the January decision making meeting.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

9. There are no apparent educational risks involved in this proposed closure. However, if the closure is not approved there is the risk that the ongoing lack of specialist staff and experienced leadership in this Centre will impact negatively on the academy's ability to make a viable educational offer; and it is unlikely that the County Council or any parent would want to place their child there under these circumstances

Financial and Value for Money Implications

10. The DfE currently fund £10,000 per place for special educational needs provision. The place budget at Echelford is £100,000 (ten places). There is also an additional £18,000 income recouped from other local authorities. There is a risk that by closing the unit the County Council loses this £100,000 place funding. The guidance states that where a local authority is reducing place numbers and requesting that it should retain the funding released due to a re-organisation of provision, the criteria will be, that the local authority has demonstrated that:
 - they will be providing for the same (or additional) number of places through other provision; or
 - that the re-organisation will bring medium term benefits in terms of increased choice, better outcomes or cost effectiveness.
11. Surrey County Council would therefore have to make a case to the DfE to retain the place funding by demonstrating one of the above criteria for the change. However, if the Local Authority cannot place children in this Centre owing to its lack of specialist staff it is unlikely that the funding will be retained.
12. These arrangements for annual review of place funding by the DfE are new. If the place funding is lost, then Surrey could still be faced with the need to fund additional in-school support for pupils who would otherwise have been placed in the unit, without retaining the funding previously allocated to the unit. However, given the high vacancy level at the unit and the current numbers for re-providing are small (two Surrey resident children) the financial risk may not be significant, but nevertheless the risk remains.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

13. The Section 151 Officer acknowledges that the school want the unit to close, so they can concentrate on other issues and that the unit usage is very low. However, there is a risk of the County Council losing the £100,000 place funding.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

14. The children that were attending the SLCN Centre at The Echelford each have a statement of special educational need which named The Echelford as the appropriate provision in part 4 of this document. Four of these statements are maintained by Hounslow Local Authority and two by Surrey County Council. As stated earlier in this report, emergency statement reviews have been undertaken by the relevant Authority with parents and carers and the statements have been amended accordingly. Parents will retain their statutory

right to appeal if they are dissatisfied with the new named educational provision.

Equalities and Diversity

15. All six pupils on roll have had suitable alternative educational provision made for them as part of this process in anticipation of the closure of this Centre. Four of the pupils are Hounslow residents and Hounslow Local Authority is therefore the responsible body in their cases. Negotiations between Surrey and Hounslow Officers have secured this provision in Hounslow in readiness for January 2014 or sooner. Of the two Surrey residents, one child will remain at The Echelford School to complete his primary education there with in class support. The other child has been allocated a place in an alternative Centre and started there in September 2013.
16. There are no specialist staff currently employed to work in the Centre therefore no staff will lose their permanent post if the Centre closes.
17. No group with any protected characteristics under Equalities legislation has been affected by this proposal as improved provision for the children with SENs has been made. The students are all covered by the general Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) made by Surrey County Council in respect of its educational provision. No separate EIA has therefore been made.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

18. All parents, including Corporate Parents, have been consulted about the general principle of closure of this centre and also the specific impact on their child's education. There have been no representations from the parents of Looked After children to suggest that the centre does not close.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

19. Safeguarding considerations have been taken into account in the proposal to close this Centre. It is believed that without sufficiently trained and experienced staff in post and without relocating the Centre to a more suitable place in the school, there was, and continues to be, a slightly elevated safeguarding risk which the staff would have to mitigate.
20. The school has a Safeguarding policy in place which also covers the specialist Centre. Were the Centre not to close then a risk assessment would need to be undertaken and any operational recommendations would be implemented by the Executive Head and Governors.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

21. Removal of the remaining pupils in this Centre has reduced the daily taxi journeys into Surrey being made by the four Hounslow children. The nearest SLCN Centre is located in Stanwell which is close to Ashford and will serve this area of the county in without any changes to its capacity at present. If it is necessary to expand the number of places on offer the Local Authority would look, in the first instance, to see if it is possible to make these available within Spelthorne Borough at this school, subject to a needs assessment.

What happens next:

23. The Cabinet Member is asked to determine, on the basis of the information given above, whether or not to close the specialist Speech, Language and Communications Centre at The Echelford School from 30 January 2014.

Contact Officers:

Beverley Clarke, Joint Head of Additional and Special Educational Needs
01372 832593

Melanie Harris, Schools Commissioning Officer for NE Surrey 020 8541 9556

Consulted:

The School staff, parents of pupils on roll both at the school and at the Centre, Hounslow Local Authority, the local County Councillor

Background Papers:

The Consultation Document

The most recent OFSTED report on The Echelford Primary School (December 2012)

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/125071>

Sources/background papers:

OFSTED and HMI reports on The Echelford Primary School

The Section 8 Inspection (first Monitoring) report by HMI (February 2013)

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