

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS, SKILLS AND  
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT****DATE: 14 DECEMBER 2015****LEAD OFFICER: JULIE FISHER, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE****SUBJECT: AMALGAMATION OF THE HOPE EPSOM AND THE HOPE  
GUILDFORD TO FORM THE HOPE SERVICE****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey County Council (SCC) has consulted on a proposal to amalgamate The Hope Epsom and The Hope Guildford to form one single Hope Service across two separate sites from 1 January 2016.

The consultation period was from 23 September to 7 October and there were two public meetings during this time, held on 29 and 30 September 2015, one at each site. Statutory Notices were issued on 12 October 2015 and were displayed at each site and published in the local newspaper stating the intention to amalgamate the two centres.

The Cabinet Member is asked to review the proposal and comments received during the consultation and statutory notice periods.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the Statutory Notice stating the Local Authority's intention to amalgamate the two centres is determined, such that there will be one service across two sites only from 1 January 2016.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This will lead to streamlined Pupil Referral Unit provision in Surrey and the aligning of organisational arrangements with current working operations.

**DETAILS:****Business Case**

1. The Hope Service is registered as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and is a multi-agency service for young people aged 11-18 who have complex mental health, emotional, social and educational needs which cannot be met by one agency alone. It is a joint partnership between SCC and the Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SABT). Health Services, Children's Services and education work in partnership to provide support to young people in the community and through day programme provision. There is a dedicated team of social workers, nurses, teachers, psychologists, art/drama therapists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, dieticians and activity workers.

2. The day programme offers structured therapeutic, educational and personalised recreational activities to young people. The programme is flexible to ensure that it meets individual needs in a safe, supportive and therapeutic environment. In addition to education, there is a focus on individual and group therapy, art therapy, drama therapy, psychology, cognitive behavioural therapy, anger and anxiety management, assertiveness training and practical social and living skills.
3. Education is planned and delivered to young people according to their ability and need both individually and in small groups. Emphasis is placed on supporting each young person to enjoy their learning and to celebrate their achievements. Hope staff work closely with other education establishments to ensure a smooth transition for each young person back into education, employment or training upon discharge. The programme runs daily during term time and continues with therapeutic work and activities in the school holidays.
4. Hope is based over two sites; West Park in Epsom which was set up in October 2004 and Worplesdon Road, Guildford that started in January 2005. Currently the service has one Management Committee, one Teacher in charge of education and a number of teaching, medical and support staff that work across both sites. However, the sites are registered individually as PRUs and are therefore subject to separate OFSTED inspections. Their last OFSTED inspections were Epsom in 2013 and Guildford in 2012; both outcomes were 'Good'.
5. When Hope was established originally it was envisaged that this would be one service based across two sites. However, during the initial set up period there were some transition difficulties. It was decided to proceed with a single registration for each centre so that the service could begin at Epsom sooner with Guildford following at a later date. It would be beneficial to bring the two PRUs together so that they are registered as one PRU and Service as originally envisaged.
6. One Management Committee oversees Hope Epsom and Guildford and there will be no change to existing staffing structures or staff working arrangements, some of whom already work over both sites. With the service being registered as one PRU across two sites they would be subject to one single OFSTED inspection rather than two as they are now.
7. Admissions and access to the service for young people will continue unchanged.
8. The Management Committee and senior leadership team at the PRU are fully in agreement with the proposal to amalgamate the centres.

<b><u>CONSULTATION:</u></b>
-----------------------------

9. A consultation period started on 23 September and concluded on 7 October 2015. Two public meetings were held on 29 September at the Guildford site and 30 September 2015 at the Epsom centre. There were no attendees at either of the public consultation meetings.

## Consultation responses

10. A total of four written responses were received during the consultation period via the Surrey Says website, post and email:

Young Person attending Hope	0
Young Person previously attending Hope	0
Parent/carer of a young person attending Hope	1
Parent/carer of a young person previously attending Hope	0
Hope staff or management committee	0
Healthcare professional	1
Social care professional	0
Other	2

11. Of the responses received 100% agreed with the proposal to amalgamate the two Hope centres to become one service. Additional commentary was provided by two of the responders both of which noted the benefit to staff with a reduced number of Ofsted inspections.
12. The Statutory Notice period ran from 12 October to 16 November 2015 and generated no further responses to the proposal.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

13. One risk has been identified with this proposal which relates to a financial factor. Currently, Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) for existing PRUs is £4000 for the each site plus £3.75 per single registered pupil each. If the PRUs were amalgamated then the combined PRU would only receive one lump sum of £4000, therefore with the amalgamation there would be a loss of £4000 per year. PRUs do not attract split site funding in the same way that schools are able to.
14. The Management Committee has accepted this reduction in funding and believes that the benefits of the formal amalgamation outweigh the loss of £4000 per year of DFC funding.

### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

15. One small financial risk has been identified as above.

### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

16. The two HOPE PRUs are largely funded on the basis of the number of places so the amalgamation will have no significant impact on funding levels other than the small reduction in DFC capital funding described above. It is felt the advantages of amalgamation far outweigh this small funding reduction which can be managed within the Centres' overall budget.

### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

17. There is a clear expectation in public law that the Council should carry out a consultation process whenever it is considering making significant changes to service provision, or has a made a commitment to, or has a practice of consulting on the matters under consideration. Such consultation will need to

involve those directly affected by such changes together with relevant representative groups. It will be important that the material presented to consultees provides sufficient information to allow for intelligent consideration and response in relation to the proposals. This information will need to be presented in a way that consultees will understand. This appears to have been done.

18. The responses to the consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into account when the Cabinet makes any future decision in relation to the issue.
19. The council owes a fiduciary duty to its council tax payers, analogous to that owed by trustees responsible for looking after property belonging to other people. Accordingly in deciding to spend money a local authority must take account of the interests of council taxpayers who have contributed to the council's income and balance those interests against those who benefit from the expenditure. It will also need to act in a prudent way having regard to the short and long term consequences of the decision.
20. The best value duty is contained in s3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a result of which the council is under a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The relevant guidance states that councils should consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value when reviewing service provision

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

21. No impacts have been identified as part of this proposal. The provision will continue as it has done previously with no changes for staff, young people that access the service or members of the community.

#### **Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications**

22. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The PRU would continue to apply good practice in the area of safeguarding. Safeguarding is monitored when Ofsted carries out inspections of schools.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

23. Subject to Cabinet Member approval of the Statutory Notice, the proposal will be confirmed for The Hope Epsom and The Hope Guildford being amalgamated to form one single Hope Service across two separate sites from 1 January 2016.

---

#### **Contact Officer:**

Julie Beckett, School Commissioning Officer, Tel: 01483 518109

#### **Consulted:**

SCC County Councillor for the local area  
All Surrey secondary schools  
All Surrey special schools  
All parents of young people at the PRU

All staff and the Management Committee at the school  
Family Voice  
SCC Officers  
Health and Therapy Providers  
Unions  
Babcock 4S Consultants

**Sources/background papers:**

School Organisation Consultation paper: Proposal to amalgamate Hope Epsom and Guildford to a single establishment

---

This page is intentionally left blank