

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL AGE LEARNING****DATE: 17 JULY 2018****LEAD OFFICER: DAVE HILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING****SUBJECT: AMALGAMATION OF MANOR MEAD AND WALTON LEIGH SCHOOLS****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey County Council (SCC) has consulted on a proposal to amalgamate Manor Mead School and Walton Leigh Schools from 1 January 2019 so that the north east area has one single school for pupils with severe learning development and disability needs (SLDD).

The consultation period was from 23 May 2018 to 27 June 2018 and there were two public meetings held during this time.

The Cabinet Member is asked to review the proposal and comments received during the consultation and to determine if it is appropriate to proceed and issue a statutory notice to amalgamate the schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That a Statutory Notice is issued in the new academic year stating the Local Authority's intention to amalgamate the two schools, such that there will be one school for pupils with SLDD in the north east area from 1 January 2019. The newly amalgamated school will be further extended by 8 additional places to become a 160 planned place school.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This proposal will streamline SLDD provision in the north east of Surrey and will formalise the existing hard federation arrangements. This proposal will create a more sustainable single special school based over two sites for SLDD in the north east quadrant of Surrey. The proposal will provide additional planned places for pupils in the area that require provision of this nature.

DETAILS:**Business Case**

1. Surrey's special school provision for SLDD typically offer arrangements to pupils with a variety of needs, predominately with Severe Learning difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning difficulties (PMLD) and some with Autism (ASD). These schools support pupils with a high complexity of development difficulties, both physical and cognitive.

2. Manor Mead School is located in Shepperton and offers educational provision for pupils aged 2-11. The last OSFTED inspection at Manor Mead took place in February 2015 and the outcome was 'Outstanding' in all areas.
3. Walton Leigh School is located in Walton on Thames and offers educational provision for pupils aged 11-19. The last OFSTED inspection at Walton Leigh took place in February 2014 and the outcome was 'Outstanding' in all areas.
4. Manor Mead and Walton Leigh schools are joined together as a 'hard federation' under the leadership of one Executive Headteacher and one Governing Body. Each school is an individual organisation with a different Department for Education (DfE) registration and school budget. Generally pupils attending Manor Mead School transfer to and attend Walton Leigh for their secondary and post 16 education.
5. Both Manor Mead and Walton Leigh schools offer similar provision for pupils that have SLDD. Both schools are located in the north east quadrant of Surrey, approximately 3 miles from each other. As the schools are located within reasonable proximity of each other and are already working together as a hard federation rationalising the arrangements to create one school would combine good practice from each and would develop a larger school which is more sustainable in the longer term.
6. The amalgamation of the two schools will form one school for pupils with SLDD from the age of 2 to 19 in the north east quadrant of Surrey. This replicates SLDD arrangements that exist elsewhere in the county at other specialist schools in Farnham, Guildford, Camberley and Leatherhead. The amalgamated school would continue to operate across the two existing sites on a 'split site' basis.
7. Currently Walton Leigh is the smallest SLDD school in Surrey. Amalgamation with Manor Mead to create one school with greater pupil numbers would develop a larger organisation, which is more financially sustainable in the longer term.
8. Demand for specialist school places in the north east area for pupils with SLDD needs is high and other provision across the county is operating at high levels of occupancy. Additional places in a specialist school will help support local families who otherwise have to travel further afield. This will enable a decrease in home to school travel times and cost. Where places are currently unavailable at Manor Mead and Walton Leigh or other maintained SLDD schools across the county, there is demand for placements in the NMI sector at high annual costs. Once a pupil has been placed in non-maintained and Independent (NMI) provision it is more likely they will remain there for at least the remainder of the key stage and on occasions until the end of their formal education.
9. There will be no change to pupil admissions. Pupils will continue to access the amalgamated school according to the processes that are currently in place for pupils with an Education Health Care plan.
10. There is a current 'bulge' of pupils attending Manor Mead School who are appropriate to move into Walton Leigh School over the next 5 years. The Local Authority will be undertaking a Feasibility Study to consider the use of the current accommodation and teaching spaces at Walton Leigh school to

meet the needs of these ‘bulge’ pupils, together with the proposal to increase the planned place number at the school to 160.

CONSULTATION:

11. A consultation period started on 23 May 2018 and concluded at noon on 27 June 2018. During the consultation period, two public meetings were held on 14 June 2018: 1.30pm at Walton Leigh and 7pm at Manor Mead. One parent attended the meeting at Manor Mead School and discussed the proposals with Local Authority representatives and the Schools Management team.
12. The parent who attended the public consultation meeting expressed support for the proposal.
13. A total of 7 written responses were received during the consultation period via the Surrey Says website, post and email:

A parent/carer of a child attending Manor Mead or Walton Leigh School	6
A parent/carer of a child who may in future attend one of the schools	0
A parent/carer of a child attending another local school	0
Staff member at one of the schools	1
A governor of one of the schools	0
A resident living close/adjacent to one of the schools	0
Other link to one of the schools	0

14. Of the responses to the consultation received 100% agreed with the proposal to amalgamate the schools. Individual written comments were provided by most respondents and were positive about the benefits this proposal would bring for children, parents and staff.
15. One respondent noted that their agreement was subject to the development of the capacity of the existing building at Walton Leigh School.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

16. There is significant pressure on expenditure for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision and a duty for the authority to ensure that this funding is used to maximum effect. If the amalgamation did not occur then there is a risk that SEND resources would not be used as effectively as possible in the quadrant and one of the schools could become unsustainable in the future.
17. If the amalgamation did not happen there is the risk that one of smallest schools for pupils with this type of need in Surrey would be unable to make the necessary maintained provision for this type of pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan. This would then lead to provision being required from the non-maintained and independent sector, at a much higher per pupil cost.
18. Demand for specialist school provision in this area of Surrey is high. If additional places are not developed at the school then pupils will either need to travel to schools in other parts of Surrey where a vacancy may be available

and incur a higher home to school transport cost. Alternatively the other option is to place the pupil in non-maintained and independent provision, at a much higher pupil cost, together with a higher home to school transport cost.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

19. Walton Leigh School is one of the smallest SEN schools in Surrey. Creating one school with greater pupil numbers would develop a larger organisation, which is more financially sustainable in the longer term.
20. Due to the increase in places there will be an additional annual cost for the number of planned places. Each planned place will be funded at a base level of £10,000. For each pupil that attends the school a top up sum is also applied. Therefore the additional places proposed will generate an extra £80,000 in planned place funding for the school, together with top up which is allocated on a banding basis according to the individual needs of the pupil.
21. Due to the increase in places there will be an additional annual cost to ensure that additional speech and language therapy is available to the extra pupils accessing the school.
22. A recent viability study has been carried out and has identified that the current building at Walton Leigh School lacks capacity for the existing pupils. It will be unable to accommodate the additional pupils that are due to transfer into the school over the next 5 years. In order to identify potential solutions for developing the site a detailed feasibility study will take place shortly. Any proposal to develop a capital scheme to address the capacity aspect and additional pupils will be subject to a business case considered by the Council's Investment Panel and Cabinet Member or Cabinet.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

23. The County Council is currently under significant financial pressure, so recommendations need to demonstrate value for money. The section 151 officer confirms there are additional revenue and capital costs with this proposal, which will require more detailed vfm analysis as the proposal develops.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

24. There is a requirement for consultation in this context as set out in The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013.
25. 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. The responses to the consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into account when the Cabinet Member makes the decision.
26. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on the Council to secure that efficient primary and secondary education is available to meet the needs of the population in its area. This includes meeting the special

educational needs of pupils where relevant. In doing so, the Council is required to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in its area. There is a legal duty on the Council therefore to secure the availability of efficient education in its area and sufficient schools to enable this.

Equalities and Diversity

27. An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out for this part of the consultation. This will be completed if a statutory notice is published and will be available for the next phase of the process.

Other Implications:

28. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report
Environmental sustainability	Set out below

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

29. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in all Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The amalgamated school would continue to apply good practice in the area of safeguarding, following the same good and outstanding practises that the two individual schools are currently. In addition, safeguarding is a key area for monitoring when Ofsted carries out inspections.
30. For vulnerable pupils with SEND, the provision of additional places, closer to home, will be beneficial. This may reduce travel time for many families and will also limit the number of school transitions as pupils will be able to stay in a single school throughout their education, if this provision remains appropriate for their needs and parents express a preference for a continued placement

Environmental sustainability implications

31. The provision of additional SLDD places closer to home for residents with SEND will enable shorter travel distances and therefore a positive impact on environmental sustainability.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

32. Subject to Cabinet Member approval the Statutory Notice will be published in September 2018 proposing that the schools amalgamate to form one school for pupils with SLDD across two separate sites from 1 January 2019. This notice will propose a formal closure of one school and extend the number of places at the other. The newly amalgamated school will have 8 additional places, increasing the planned place number to 160.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Cabinet Member for All Age Learning
Headteacher and Governing Body of Manor Mead and Walton Leigh Schools
Parents and carers at Manor Mead and Walton Leigh Schools
Surrey Special Schools
Liz Mills Assistant Director, Schools and Learning
Local County Councillor Manor Mead School area Richard Walsh
Local County Councillor Walton Leigh School area John O'Reilly
Local Borough Councillors
Dioceses
Other Local Authorities
Unions

Sources/background papers:

School Organisation consultation paper
<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/manormeadwaltonleigh/>
Amalgamation consultation outcomes dated 27 June 2018