

Cllr N Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Ref No: ES05 (20/21)
July 2020	Key Decision: Yes
Change of status for The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to co-educational schools	Part I
Director of Education and Skills	Electoral Divisions: Horsham East and Broadwater

Summary

Demand for places at single-sex boys schools in West Sussex has been declining in recent years and this is evidenced by a reduction in the overall number of families applying for boys schools as first preferences. Reduced pupil numbers impacts upon the finances available to schools and thereby on how the school can deliver the opportunities required to both staff and pupils.

To address these issues the governing bodies of The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing feel that conversion to become co-educational schools will not only enable increased pupil numbers but also increase opportunities for girls and provide a wider range of curriculum benefits for boys through co-educational subjects.

The Director of Education & Skills agreed to consult on the proposed significant change of character to alter The Forest School, Horsham from a single sex boys' school to a co-educational school from September 2021 entry. At the same time, the Governing Body of St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing consulted on changing from a single sex boys' school to a co-educational school from September 2021 entry. As St Andrew's CE High School for Boys' is a voluntary aided Church school, different regulations regarding who initiates the consultation apply.

The proposed changes would mean the schools will no longer admit only boys as Year 7 pupils from September 2021 and each year of entry thereafter would be co-educational. There are no changes proposed to have co-educational provision for any of the existing year groups on roll at both schools. There are also no proposals to alter the single sex girls' provision at either Millais School, Horsham or Davison CE High School for Girls, Worthing.

The consultations took place during June 2020 and the outcome is set out in section 3.

West Sussex Plan: Policy Impact and Context

Best Start in Life: Approval of the change in status for The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing supports the County Council's aspirations to be placed in the top quartile of performing Councils within three years, in terms of children's attainment. These proposals are integral to

helping achieve high performing and financially sustainable schools in West Sussex that benefit the children and communities for years to come.

Financial Impact

There is no direct financial revenue cost to the County Council as each school receives its own funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) based on the number of pupils at the school.

A potential capital cost of £1.4m over four years is estimated and this will be funded through S106 developer contributions where appropriate and the Council's Basic Needs Capital Grant allocation from government.

Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to approve the following proposals:-

1. The conversion of The Forest School, Horsham to become a co-educational school with effect from September 2021
2. To support the Governing body's decision to convert St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to become a co-educational school with effect from September 2021.
3. To agree the publication of statutory notices to implement both changes with effect from September 2021.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 Both schools recognise that there is an opportunity for positive change through becoming co-educational schools rather than remaining as single-sex boys' schools. There is also a clear desire to provide a new educational choice for parents in both local areas and the proposed changes will build on the progress made by both schools in improving provision at the schools. Whilst there is mixed evidence about the progress of boys in single-sex schools compared to co-educational schools, the teaching professionals and governing bodies in both schools recognise many benefits of the schools becoming co-educational and see this as an opportunity to further improve provision and to drive standards higher. The two boys' schools are the only ones remaining in West Sussex as Chichester High School for Boys and Chichester High School for Girls merged several years ago to create a co-educational school due to the limited popularity of the single-sex boys' school.
- 1.2 After due consideration of the options regarding future admissions to the school, which included maintaining the school as a single sex boys school, West Sussex County Council, along with the Governing Body of The Forest School agreed to consult on the proposal to change the status of the school from a single sex boys school to a co-educational school.
- 1.3 West Sussex County Council, the Diocese of Chichester and the Governing Body of St Andrew's CE High School for Boys agreed, after due consideration of the options regarding future admissions to the school which included maintaining the school as a single sex boys' school, to consult on the

proposal to change the status of the school from a single sex boys' school to a co-educational school.

- 1.4 The consultations included the proposal that the first co-educational cohort would be for Year 7 admissions only from September 2021. If, following the consultation, it was agreed to alter the intake and become co-educational, then all subsequent Year 7 admissions would similarly be for girls and boys.

2. Proposal Details

- 2.1. The opportunity for change and a re-organisation of the schools arose from:

- A desire to provide a new educational choice for parents of students in the local area
- The positive impact of moving from a single sex boys' school to a co-educational school, including a broader range of curriculum subjects that will bring wider choice and diversity for all pupils.
- The time for the change being right for both schools as there are signs of improvement and there is significant positive momentum.
- The schools having the opportunity to receive investment from the County Council, and the Diocese of Chichester in respect of St Andrew's CE High, to enhance appropriate facilities to support the move to become co-educational schools.
- Recognition of the pressure for additional secondary school places in Horsham District and Worthing Borough, and the County Council's statutory requirement to ensure availability of sufficient secondary school places for these pupils locally. In meeting this need for additional places it is acknowledged, that co-educational schools are often more popular than single sex boys' schools.
- The breadth of current expertise within the staffing team at both schools in the teaching of boys and girls.
- An opportunity to build on the current good practice of the schools and to drive up educational standards across both towns.

- 2.2 The proposal to offer another mixed co-educational school in both Horsham and Worthing will provide parents with a different choice when choosing the right school for their child. Converting both schools to become co-educational schools will reflect the greater demand for co-educational provision in both towns and the much reduced demand for places in single sex boys' schools. It should be noted that demand for single sex girls' education remains very strong in both towns and so there are no plans to change the provision at either Millais School, Horsham or Davison CE High School for Girls School, Worthing.

- 2.3 Should the Cabinet Member approve the proposed change of both schools to become co-educational schools from September 2021, the County Council will need to publish statutory notices, in accordance with DfE guidelines, to formally consult on the proposals. The consultation would run for four weeks and unless there were new and significant comments the proposals would then be implemented from September 2021.

Factors taken into account

3. Consultation

- 3.1 On 1 June 2020, copies of the public consultation document for [The Forest School](#) and [St Andrew's CE High School for Boys](#) were distributed to the following:- Members of Parliament, County Local Committee (CLC) Members, District and Parish councillors, union representatives, neighbouring authorities, the parents, staff and governors of both schools, early years providers, the Diocese of Chichester, and the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The consultation document was also published on the County Council website and the proposals received local press coverage.
- 3.2 Responses to the consultation were received from the online survey, by letter and by email. The consultation period ended on 29 June 2020.
- 3.3 A total of 638 responses were received in response to the consultation for The Forest School, Horsham a summary of the responses to the questions in the survey is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 A further five emails were received in relation to the consultation.
- 3.5 No responses were received after the closing date of 29 June 2020. The responses showed 69% of respondents supported the proposals, 26% were against and 5% were uncertain. Many of those in favour referred to the high quality pastoral care available at The Forest School also benefiting girls; a belief that boys will develop and improve better in co-educational schools and that co-educational provision better reflects modern society and is beneficial for both educational and social reasons. Those against commented that there are already two other co-educational schools in Horsham and so a boys only school was needed, uncertainty about how it would work if Millais remained a single-sex girls' school and a belief there was a place for both co-educational and single sex schools.
- 3.6 A total of 611 responses were received in response to the consultation for St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing. A summary of the responses to the questions is set out in Appendix 2
- 3.7 A further two emails and letters were received in relation to the consultation.
- 3.8 No responses were received after the closing date of 29 June 2020. The responses showed 53% of respondents supported the proposals, 39% were against and 8% were uncertain. Many of those in favour referred to the educational outcome for boys improving if girls were admitted and that single sex schools were 'outdated' in today's society and as the world is mixed schools need to reflect there are no barriers. Those against commented that discipline is more beneficial to male pupils in a single sex school; that single sex boys schools can give an education that is specific to boys and what interests them most and that the proposals are not fair unless the girls' schools also become co-educational.
- 3.9 Whilst the proportion of responses in support of St Andrews CE Boys' School converting to become a co-educational school were less than at The Forest School, there was still a majority in favour of the changes. It was also clear that only a minority within the community were in favour of retaining single-

sex boys' schooling in Worthing. This is similarly evidenced by the lack of a sustained or increased enrolment at the school and there is strong recognition that the school cannot stay as it is and change is needed.

- 3.10 The full set of consultation responses for both schools have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

4. Financial (revenue and capital) and Resource Implications

Revenue consequences of proposal

- 4.1. Since funding for the day-to-day operations of schools comes from the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the implications of any changes to school organisation for the Council's on-going revenue budget is cost neutral. The amount of funding that a school receives to meet its day-to-day running costs is largely driven by the number of pupils on roll in the autumn census each year. No changes to staffing are proposed by the County Council and each school will organise its staffing based upon the number of pupils on roll.

Capital consequences

- 4.2. To enable both schools to admit female pupils alongside male pupils there will be a need for some capital investment. This is expected to involve the creation of female toilets and female changing rooms at both schools. In addition, facilities at each school will be reviewed. This is to ensure the teaching and delivery of curriculum topics traditionally favoured by female pupils can be provided to ensure both male and female pupils have equal access to all curriculum subjects and that there is equality of curriculum with other co-educational schools. Costs are currently being estimated by the County Council's in-house Multi-Disciplinary Consultancy and the required governance processes will need to be followed to enable business cases to be considered for funding.
- 4.3. It is expected that the necessary works would be phased over a period of up to five years as the number of female pupils steadily grows in both schools. It is also expected that the Diocese of Chichester will consider capital investment through its capital allocation process for voluntary aided schools to support both curriculum improvements and condition issues in respect of St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing. Every opportunity to use S106 Developer contributions to support capital investment at both schools to provide facilities needed for male and female pupils will be explored. Both schools will need capital works completed by September 2021 to enable the first cohort of co-educational pupils to be admitted. An estimate of likely costs is set out below:

	Current Year 2020/21 £m	Year 2 2021/22 £m	Year 3 2022/23 £m	Year 4 2023/24 £m
Capital budget	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.5

- 4.4. Through capital investment being targeted at enabling both schools to meet the needs of a co-educational school, it is expected that this will ensure that neither school disadvantages male or female pupils through access to the curriculum. The change to co-educational status will support the transformation of both schools and help meet the County Council's objectives to give children the best start in life. The proposed capital works will also bring investment, as required, into the assets of both buildings for the benefit of all users.
- 4.5. The County Council will support both projects through existing staffing and IT provision.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Section 19 Part 1 of Schedule 3 and Part 1 of Schedule 5 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) sets out the arrangements for consultation and representations and the options available to the authority taking the decision and any appeal mechanisms available to specified bodies.

6. Risk Implications and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Capital investment is not sufficient to meet all the curriculum needs of a co-educational school.	Discussions have begun with each school to prioritise the capital works so that phasing of investment can be made and thereby reduce the short term impact upon the capital programme.
Conversion to teaching both male and female pupils in a co-educational school is not successful.	Both schools already have staff with significant experience in the teaching of both boys and girls and a commitment from both governing bodies to support the improvements necessary.
Parental interest in applying for places in both schools once co-educational could be limited.	Initial consultation by both schools has indicated there is a strong support for co-educational provision and the determination exists from both schools to succeed.
The proposed change from a boys school to a co-educational school could reduce the demand for single-sex girls' school places at Millais and Davison Girls' Schools	Both girls' schools are already very popular and generally receive high numbers of applicants, including many from outside the immediate areas. There is no evidence to suggest either girls school will be adversely affected.

7. Other Options Considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 7.1 The option of keeping both schools as single sex boys' schools was given careful consideration by the County Council, both governing bodies and the Diocese of Chichester. However, there was found to be a significant concern

if a change to co-educational schools was not progressed. Demand for single sex boys' provision has been reducing, both locally and nationally. This is demonstrated at The Forest and St Andrew's by the fact that fewer pupils list it as a first preference when making choices for secondary schools and many boys are placed at the schools due to being unsuccessful with applications to co-educational schools. Access to an enhanced curriculum by becoming a co-educational school was seen as a positive outcome since both schools would need to have curriculum facilities provided that reflected a co-educational intake and would therefore help to ensure greater equality of opportunity in the National Curriculum for both genders.

- 7.2 Consideration was also given to consulting on changing all single sex schools in West Sussex to become co-educational schools but it was recognised that demand for single sex girls education was significantly stronger than for single sex boys education.

8. Equality and Human Rights Assessment

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Report has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3.
- 8.2 The EIR outlines potential impacts of the proposals together with relevant mitigation for negative impacts where relevant.

9. Social Value and Sustainability Assessment

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10. Crime and Disorder Reduction Assessment

- 10.1. Not Applicable

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of Responses from the Consultation on The Forest School, Horsham

Appendix 2 – Summary of Responses from the Consultation on St Andrews C of E High School for Boys, Worthing

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers - None