

**Mr T Kershaw, Director of Law and Assurance in agreement with Cllr N Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**October 2020**

**Change of status for The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to co-educational schools –  
Determination of Statutory Notices**

**Report by Director of Education and Skills**

**Electoral divisions: Horsham East and Broadwater**

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## **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 initial consultations took place during June 2020 and following a review of the comments received the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills took a decision to agree the publication of statutory notices to implement both changes with effect from September 2021 ([Decision reference ES05\(20/21\)](#)).

Statutory Notices were issued on the 6 August 2020. Members of the public and interested parties had the opportunity to make further representations regarding the proposed changes during a four week period that closed on the 3 September 2020. During this time one email was received in relation to the proposals for The Forest School, Horsham but this was not substantial or significant in content to amend, alter or delay the Cabinet Decision ES05 20/21. There were no representations received for St Andrews CE High School for Boys.

Notice of the intention to take the decision to determine the Statutory Notices was published in the Forward Plan on [8 July 2020](#). It was removed from the Forward Plan on 10 September 2020 as it was determined that a further decision would not be necessary. Recent communication from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator indicates a further decision is required to enable action by that office. Due to the need for this matter to be determined by 3 November 2020 the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills has authorised that this urgent decision can be taken by the Director for Law and Assurance. The Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny committee has also agreed the taking of the decision is urgent and cannot be reasonably deferred.

## **Recommendation**

The Director of Law and Assurance 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) The conversion of St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to become a co-educational school with effect from September 2021.

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## **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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 The consultations took place during June 2020. This indicated that 69% of respondents supported the proposal for The Forest School to become co-educational and 53% of respondents supported the proposal for St. Andrew's. Following a review of the feedback and comments received from the consultation the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills took a decision (Decision reference ES05(20/21)) to:
- approve the conversion of The Forest School, Horsham to become a co-educational school,

- support the Governing body's decision to convert St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to become a co-educational school and
- approve the publication of statutory notices to implement both changes with effect from September 2021.

1.8 Following this decision statutory notices in relation to the implementation of the changes were issued on the 6 August 2020, with copies displayed outside each school. Members of the public and interested parties had the opportunity to make further representations regarding the proposed changes during a four week period that closed on the 3 September 2020.

1.9 During the representation period one email was received in relation to the proposals for The Forest School, Horsham but this was not substantial or significant in content to amend, alter or delay the Cabinet Decision ES05 20/21. There were no representations received for St Andrews CE High School for Boys.

## **2 Proposal details**

2.1 It is proposed to proceed with altering The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing to become co-educational schools. The changes will mean the schools will no longer admit only boys as Year 7 pupils from September 2021 and each year of entry thereafter will be co-educational.

## **3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)**

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

## **4 Consultation, engagement and advice**

4.1 Prescribed alteration statutory notices proposing to change the character of The Forest School Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing were published on 6 August 2020 and the opportunity to make further representations closed on the 3 September 2020.

## 4.2 Representations

One representation was received for The Forest School, Horsham.

No representations for St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing, were received.

Analysis of the issue raised in the representation received in relation to The Forest School, Horsham suggests that the information submitted was not substantial and significant as to present a need to amend, alter or delay the Cabinet decision ES05 (20/21).

## 5 Finance

Revenue consequences

- 5.1 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

- 5.2 To enable both schools to admit female pupils alongside male pupils there will be a need for some capital investment. The County Council's Multi-Disciplinary Consultant (MDC) were therefore appointed to review the capital works required to enable girls to thrive at both Schools and the proposals have been shared with both Schools. Works have been separated into a first phase required for September 2021 and this is expected to involve the creation of female toilets and female changing rooms together with investment in PE facilities and Technology/STEM facilities at both schools.
- 5.3 It is expected that further works to those outlined in 5.2 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 will be funded from Basic Need grant for the first phase of works is set out below:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 to 2024/25	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Basic Need Grant per capital programme	5	7.155	33.496	45.651
Net Approvals since Approved Capital Programme	-0.53	-0.1	-1.969	-2.599
Estimated amount required	-0.5	-0.5		-1
<b>Uncommitted Basic Need</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>6.555</b>	<b>31.527</b>	<b>42.052</b>

The table above shows the approved Basic Need as per the Capital programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 and the effect on the balance remaining of this proposal as well as potential phasing.

5.4 The effect of the proposal:

(a) **How the cost represents good value**

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.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

The proposed capital works will also bring investment, as required, into the assets of both buildings for the benefit of all users.

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

The County Council will support both projects through existing staffing and IT provision.

**6 Risk implications and mitigations**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
Capital investment is not sufficient to meet all the curriculum needs of a co-educational school.	Discussions are ongoing 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

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
	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 Policy alignment and compliance**

- 7.1 Legal implications - Schedule 3, Part 1, paragraph 19 and Schedule 5, Part 1 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.
- 7.2 Equality duty and human rights assessment - an equality impact assessment was undertaken for the previous Cabinet Member decision - [reference ES05\(20/21](#) which details how the Council has given regard to the equality duty for the proposed change to co-educational provision. There have been no changes to the proposal since that decision was made and the existing assessment reflects the latest position.
- 7.3 Climate Change - by providing further places within the District/Borough where the pupils reside will negate the need to send pupils out of area for their education thereby reducing unsustainable travel
- 7.4 Crime and Disorder - none for the purpose of this report
- 7.5 Public health - none for the purpose of this report
- 7.6 Social value None for the purpose of this report

**Paul Wagstaff**

Director of Education and Skills

**Contact Officer:**

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**Background Documents** - None

**Agreed:**

Signature: 

Paul Wagstaff  
**Director of Education and Skills**

Date: 28 October 2020

Signature: 

Katherine Eberhart  
**Director of Finance and Support Services**

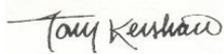
Date: 28 October 2020

Signature: 

Nigel Jupp  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Date: 28 October 2020

**Action authorised:**

Signature: 

Tony Kershaw  
**Director of Law and Assurance**

Date: 29 October 2020