

Report to: Cllr Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People Learning and Skills

March 2024

Relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and expansion of St Anthony's School – Publication of Statutory Notices

Report by Claire Hayes, Assistant Director (Education and Skills)

Electoral divisions: Chichester North and Chichester West

Summary

Jessie Younghusband Primary School is a Primary School providing up to 210 places for children aged 4-11 years. The proposal is to relocate Jessie Younghusband from its current location to a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (210 places) which is being built on the housing development west of Chichester, known as Minerva Heights.

St Anthony's School in Chichester is a Special School for children and young people aged between 4 and 16 years with moderate learning difficulties. It currently shares a site with Jessie Younghusband. There is a need to expand St Anthony's to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient places in accordance with the County Council's [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Strategy 2019-2024](#). The relocation of Jessie Younghusband would leave a vacant building which could be used for the purposes of expanding St Anthony's special school.

The creation of a new primary school is for the purpose of accommodating the additional children who will come to live in Minerva Heights which means it is also necessary to propose revisions to the catchment areas of other schools in the local area should the proposals proceed.

In December 2023 the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills approved the launch of a public consultation, in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, to seek views on the proposed changes ([decision CYPLS05\(23/24\)](#) refers). Details of the consultation process and the feedback received are set out in section 4 of this report.

The DfE guidance sets out the stages of the process that should be undertaken when considering relocation of a school. Having completed the first stage of the initial consultation, the Cabinet Member is now asked to consider the feedback received and approve the progression of the proposals to the next stage of the process.

Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills is asked to approve:

- (1) The publication of formal statutory proposals for the relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the primary school site within the Minerva Heights development. The new school is expected to open in September 2025.
 - (2) The intent to publish formal statutory proposals for the expansion of St Anthony's school into the vacated buildings currently occupied by Jessie Younghusband Primary School, should the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School proceed.
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Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 There are two parallel strategic responsibilities for the County Council sitting behind this proposal, both linked to the sufficiency of school places and the need to ensure the optimum effectiveness of educational provision is available in all school settings. Those responsibilities apply equally to mainstream school place planning as it does to planning places for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 1.2 An opportunity arises with the housing development at Minerva Heights to the north and west of Chichester as a new primary school will be built to accommodate the additional pupils who will come to live there. The opportunity relates to the option to provide a school which not only accommodates those children but which also provides places for children already accommodated within one of the Chichester primary schools enabling the provision of primary education across the city to be adjusted to facilitate a more efficient and beneficial overall provision for the children of the city.
- 1.3 The County Council wants to ensure that all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can access local schools whenever possible and where it meets their needs. This will also lead to reducing the number of children and young people with SEND needing to move into higher cost, out of county education provision. Increasing provision for children and young people with SEND in local special schools is in line with the key objectives of the County Council's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- 1.4 Depending on the requirements of the EHCP, children will require a place in a mainstream school, Special Support Centre (SSC) or maintained special school. In recent years, the requirement for SSC and special school placements has increased significantly and projections indicate that this trend will continue. Additional capacity is therefore required in maintained special schools so children can attend a school close to home. This will have the added benefit of reducing revenue costs of out of County placements in Independent and Non - Maintained Schools (INMS) and to decrease home to school transport costs.

- 1.5 St Anthony's School in Chichester is a Special School for children and young people aged between 4 and 16 years with moderate learning difficulties. Current places are insufficient to meet the need for special school places in the area resulting in children being placed in INMS. There is an urgent need to expand St Anthony's to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient places in accordance with the County Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2024.
- 1.6 Sharing a site with St Anthony's School is Jessie Younghusband Primary School which is a Primary School for children aged 4 to 11 years providing up to 210 places (Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30). The school is a successful over-subscribed primary school with a good Ofsted rating.
- 1.7 The shared site restricts the potential of expansion for both schools. The County Council has therefore worked closely with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies at both St Anthony's Special School and Jessie Younghusband Primary School to discuss options to them to expand. These discussions have led to a proposal that is intended to be beneficial for both schools.
- 1.8 In December 2023 the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills [approved](#) the launch of a public consultation to seek views on relocating Jessie Younghusband Primary School from its current location to a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (210 places/30 PAN) which is being built by the developer on the housing development west of Chichester, known as Minerva Heights. The intention is that all current pupils on roll at Jessie Younghusband Primary School, and those who are successful in obtaining a place for starting school in September 2024, will automatically transfer to the new school site.
- 1.9 The consultation also sought feedback on the proposal to expand St Anthony's School into the buildings vacated by Jessie Younghusband Primary School. This expansion could create circa 50 additional places for children with SEND aged between 4 and 16.
- 1.10 The new primary school at Minerva Heights was secured through a Section 106 Agreement and the site is of sufficient size to accommodate an expansion to 2FE (420 places) should demand arising from the new development and wider planning area warrant an additional form of entry. The relocation therefore provides scope for future expansion of a successful primary school thereby providing greater financial sustainability due to increased pupil numbers and school budget share.
- 1.11 Under the terms of a Section 106 agreement, CC/4301/14, the housing developer has opted to construct the new 1FE primary school. The construction programme indicates completion of the school site for September 2025 occupation.
- 1.12 The creation of a primary school in a new location together with the need to include the additional children who will live in Minerva Heights means it is now necessary to review current catchment areas for primary admissions in the local area and to see if this can align capacities of the schools that currently provide places for children from this area. Pupil numbers within the relevant catchment areas need adjustment once the development is complete. As part of the consultation, views were also sought on the proposed changes to the primary catchment area in Chichester considering both the new school being built at

Minerva Heights and the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School. The changes would affect the catchment areas for Jessie Younghusband Primary School, Parklands Community Primary School, and Fishbourne C of E Primary School.

2 Proposal details

2.1 On closure of the public consultation 624 people had completed the online survey and 39 separate emails were received. Details of the main points raised and responses to these points are set out in section 4 and a summary of responses to the online consultation included at Appendix 1.

2.2 It is proposed to proceed to the next stage of the process to relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the primary school site within the Minerva Heights development and the subsequent expansion of St Anthony's School. In accordance with [DfE Guidance on Making Significant Changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to Maintained Schools](#), this requires the County Council to issue statutory proposals that set out the proposed changes. This consists of a 4-week period where the public can make further representations by letter or email. However, it should be noted that these representations cannot be a repeat of the evidence already provided but offers the opportunity to highlight new information to the decision maker. The following will be subject to statutory proposals:

It is proposed that Jessie Younghusband Primary School transfers to a new site, part of the new development to the east of Chichester now known as Minerva Heights on land at Old Broyle Road, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 3PH.

2.3 To enable any decisions to take effect from September 2025, it is recommended that the statutory notices run during April and May 2024 followed by a decision on the proposals to enable communication before the summer holiday. There would then follow further discussions with the schools concerned, as appropriate, to ensure parents are clear on the arrangements for September 2025 entry.

2.4 Should the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School be confirmed it would then be necessary to publish formal statutory proposals, in accordance with the DfE guidance, for the expansion of St Anthony's school into the vacated buildings currently occupied by Jessie Younghusband Primary School.

2.5 It is also proposed to revise the catchment areas of the following three schools should the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School be confirmed (see plan at Appendix 2):

- Revise the catchment area for Jessie Younghusband Primary School to include the whole of the Minerva Heights development as well as the area of land to the right of the development, whilst retaining its existing catchment area.
- Revise the catchment area for Parklands Community Primary School to finish along the boundary line of Centurion Way, where it borders the Minerva Heights development, whilst retaining the remainder of their existing catchment area.

- Revise the catchment area for Fishbourne C of E Primary School by removing the existing area which falls within the Minerva Heights development, retaining the remainder of their existing catchment area.

2.6 Following the proposed statutory notice period for the Jessie Younghusband relocation, determination of whether to proceed or not, including any potential confirmation of the changes to the catchment areas and the publication of statutory proposals for the expansion of St Anthony's School, will be the subject of a further Cabinet Member Key Decision Report.

2.7 A feasibility study for the expansion of St Anthony's Special School into vacated Jessie Younghusband Primary School buildings has been instructed to identify estimated costs. This has suggested that the capital costs could be comparable to other similar SEN projects at some £3m. Further design work, procurement and competitive tendering would be needed following business cases progressing through the County Council's capital governance process. The option of expanding St Anthony's Special School through a new build and leaving Jessie Younghusband Primary School on its current site has been estimated to be significantly costly and likely to exceed £13m. It is not considered that the option of having no expansion to St Anthony's would be in compliance with the County Council's responsibilities nor its SEND strategy.

3 Other options considered

3.1 There is an option to undertake an Academy presumption process to seek applications from Academy Trusts to open a new school on the Minerva Heights development. This is not the preferred option as the proposal to relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary School provides sustainable places and an option to expand an existing Primary School rated as Good by Ofsted. Further, this option would not enable the expansion of St Anthony's School into the vacated Jessie Younghusband Primary School site which would enable the County Council to meet the additional demand for SEND Specialist places.

3.2 The option to not relocate Jessie Younghusband Primary and expand SEND provision at another West Sussex County Council special school or to repurpose provision elsewhere has been considered and discounted as the challenges of operating St Anthony's on a split site arrangement are impractical and not supported by the Headteacher or Governing Body.

4 Consultation, engagement, and advice

4.1 The consultation launched on the 14 December 2023; copies of the public consultation document were distributed seeking responses from: Members of Parliament, Local members, District and Parish councillors, union representatives, neighbouring authorities, the parents/carers, staff and governors of the affected schools, early years providers, local libraries, the Diocese of Chichester and the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The consultation was also [published](#) on the Your Voice Engagement Hub section of the County Council website and the proposals received local press coverage. Local Members of the County Council had already been offered the opportunity to attend a briefing on 24th October 2023 regarding the proposed consultation.

4.2 All schools were notified in advance of the consultation and asked to support any families who might require additional help such as language support or access to IT to enable them to complete the consultation. They were also

provided with a draft letter to share with both staff and parents in advance of the consultation going live and provided guidance on how to access the online consultation process. The County Council relied on schools to distribute this information to parents and the wider community.

- 4.3 The consultation period ended on the 31 January 2024. The consultation period met the statutory timeframe and was extended from the required four weeks to a seven-week consultation to allow for the Christmas break.
- 4.4 Responses to the consultation were received via the online survey and by email. It should be noted that respondents to the consultation did not always provide answers to all questions and sometimes gave more than one answer to questions. One response was received after the closing date of 31 January 2024 and therefore is not included and does not form part of the analysis of comments received.
- 4.5 In total 624 people completed the online survey, 39 separate emails were received. A summary of all online responses is included as appendix 1.
- 4.6 An online petition objecting to the proposals was brought to the attention of the County Council. It had 666 signatures on 31 January 2024. The County Council is not able to verify addresses and names with regard to duplication or locality in line with the County Council's [Petitions guidance](#). It is however recorded and has been considered alongside the other consultation responses. The issues it raised (traffic, environmental impact, walking and cycling and community cohesion) are covered in the responses to consultation provided in appendix 1.
- 4.7 A petition was received via the County Council's e-petitions page of the website requesting a pedestrian crossing at Sherborne Road/Norwich Road, Chichester. The petition closed on 31 January 2024, coinciding with the closure of the public consultation on the proposals regarding Jessie Younghusband Primary School. The petition received 23 signatures, which have all been verified as valid.
- 4.8 Since the closure of the consultation a separate petition has been organised in support of the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the Minerva Heights development and the expansion of St Anthony's Special School. The petition runs from 5th March 2024 to 12th May 2024 and as of 19th March had support from 432 respondents.
- 4.9 One of the main concerns raised regarding the proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School, was in relation to the accessibility of the school for those choosing to walk, cycle or scoot to school. A collection of photographs and dashboard camera footage was submitted as part of the consultation responses showing the traffic congestion around St Paul's Road, Broyle Road and access to Sherborne Road which would be used to access Minerva Heights by some of the pupils who attend the current site. Officers are currently in discussion with the Safer Routes to Schools team regarding the suitability of a proposed walking/cycling route to the relocated school via the nearby Centurion Way. WSP (William Sale Partnership LTD) have been commissioned to undertake a travel survey identifying the mode of transport pupils use to travel to Jessie Younghusband school now, and how pupils plan to travel to the new Minerva Heights school.

4.10 In response to the question in the consultation regarding the expansion of St Anthony's School into the buildings vacated by Jessie Younghusband Primary School, by circa 50 places, 229 respondents were in support, 332 opposed the proposal and 63 did not have a preference either way.

4.11 The following considerations are offered by way of response to issues raised in the consultation:

- i) *To enable the expansion of St Anthony's without relocating Jessie Younghusband, by using land or facilities elsewhere.*
The provision of additional SEN places at St Anthony's Special School on the current site alongside Jessie Younghusband Primary School is not viable. In addition, the Headteacher and Governing Body advise the benefits of expansion on the current site will allow increased provision for pupils in the Chichester area and the continued benefit of using the existing specialist provision on the site;
- ii) *There will be no benefit to the pupils of Jessie Younghusband Primary School and it will be disruptive for current pupils.*
The Minerva Heights development will see a new 1FE (210 pupils) primary school building being provided that has the potential to be expanded, when need requires, to 2FE (420 pupils). This means the potential to expand a popular school and to increase its resources and resilience through expansion and thereby enhance the quality of education.

The relocation of a popular and oversubscribed school will allow it to move into modern buildings and have the potential to expand to 2FE (420 places). The existing pupils on roll will continue to attend the school in its new buildings and as the Minerva Heights development progresses there will be the ability to consider when a further expansion to 2 FE (420 pupils) will be required without additional disruption.
- iii) *The loss of community links to the school in its established location.*
The retention of the existing catchment area for Jessie Younghusband Primary School and expansion to include most of the Minerva Heights development was requested by the Co-Chairs of Governors at Jessie Younghusband Primary School and provides the most pragmatic way of retaining the same community links to the area and also recognising the growth of the Minerva Heights development and the benefits of children new to that development being able to join an established well-regarded school.
- iv) *The lack of a safe walking route to the new school*
Concerns about the availability of a safe and accessible walking route from the existing catchment area of Jessie Younghusband Primary School to the new site at Minerva Heights have been considered by officers who have walked the routes to and from the school via both the Centurion Way and using St Paul's Road. Considering the various factors which need to be taken into account and by reference to knowledge about routes used by primary school pupils across the County it was concluded that both routes are considered suitable for children to walk, accompanied as necessary by parents/carers;

At this stage it is not possible to predict the likely patterns of future parental preferences to identify what further mitigation might be explored. However, all schools are expected to have a School Travel Plan to:

- Reduce the number of vehicles on the journey to school,
- Improve safety on the journey to school,
- Encourage more active and sustainable travel choices.

v) The proposed changes to the catchment areas of both Parklands Community Primary School and Fishbourne C of E Primary School received a high level of support through those in favour and those who neither supported or opposed the proposals;

- 4.12 The Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee considered the proposals at the meeting on 28th February 2024, which included input from the local members for both Chichester North and Chichester West. The Committee recognised the need to increase SEND places in West Sussex and that the expansion of St Anthony's Special School would provide some of the much needed special school places in the local area.
- 4.13 The Committee also recognised the importance of a safer route to school for the proposed new location and asked that this is progressed as a priority to ensure that there is a sufficient and robust walking/ cycling route in place should the proposals go ahead. They also supported upgrades to St Paul's Road being progressed regardless of whether these proposals go forward and that these could be explored through a Community Highways Scheme.
- 4.14 The Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that the required capital funding would be available to deliver the additional SEND places should the proposals proceed. The Committee also queried whether the outcomes of the proposal would balance against the impact the proposals could have on local parents and families.
- 4.15 The Committee acknowledged and thanked residents and local members for comments and feedback provided so far, recognising the breadth of concerns raised. They noted that, if approved, the next step would be to go out to statutory proposals where further views could be made and asked to be kept updated on this. They also asked to see the impact assessment on transitions for children as part of the decision-making process This will be led by the head teacher, should the decision be taken to proceed with the proposals.

5 Finance

Revenue consequences

- 5.1 Revenue funding for mainstream schools is regulated through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block National Funding Formula (NFF). The school would therefore continue to receive funding through the current mechanism. There are no direct revenue funding implications against County Council funding because of this proposal for relocating Jessie Younghusband Primary School.
- 5.2 Revenue funding for special schools is regulated through the DSG High Needs block and once again there are no direct revenue funding implications against

County Council revenue funding. The school would continue to receive funding through the current mechanism.

- 5.3 The revenue funding implications against the DSG High Needs Block will be updated once the more detailed business case is brought forward regarding the proposed expansion of St Anthony’s Special School.

Capital consequences

- 5.4 Any project will go through the County Council’s capital governance process, which will require a Business Case and officer approval followed by a cabinet member decision. It will then enter the Capital Programme leading to a designed scheme which will need to be approved. The funding, if this project is approved, would be a mixture of Basic Need, SEND Funding & Section 106. It would need to be weighed against other competing expansions and provision of places that fall within the available SEND, Basic Need and Section 106 funding. The expansion of St Anthony’s Special School is a priority project within the SEND Sufficiency Plan.
- 5.5 The opportunity to convert and use an existing building for increased SEN provision represents good value through minimising the carbon impact of new buildings. Increasing SEN places allows the County Council to both meet the needs of the local population and provide a suitable provision at a reduced cost compared to INMS placement costs.

Human Resources implications

- 5.6 If this proposal is agreed, there will be a need for staff to work in a different location however impact will be minimal due to the short distance of the move and an appropriate communication/consultation process will be followed. There are no proposed reductions to staffing numbers resulting from this proposal.
- 5.7 If this proposal is agreed, in accordance with the West Sussex County Council relocation policy, provisions for mileage allowance resulting from staff relocation do not apply due to the minimal distance.
- 5.8 If this proposal is agreed, the Governing Body will work with West Sussex County Council Officers to support staff through the process of relocation.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
That the new developer built primary school will not be complete for occupation in September 2025	There is regular liaison between the County Council and the developer with progress being monitored closely. There is an obligation within the S106 Agreement to provide the new school. Should a delay to completion for September 2025 occur the County Council will consider whether partial occupancy is possible or a move at another time during the 2025/26 academic year. In exceptional circumstances a delay by one academic year would be considered although this would impact on the timescale for adapting the Jessie Younghusband Primary building for use by St Anthony’s Special School.

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Insufficient capital funding for expanding St Anthony's	Should the proposals be approved to expand St Anthony's Special School these will result in a revenue benefit to West Sussex County Council and a business case will be progressed through the County's Capital Governance process to secure sufficient capital funding.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

7.1 Our Council Plan

Investment in educational provision to ensure children and young people achieve their potential and make the best use of resources is a key strand of the [Council's plan](#) for its residents.

7.2 Legal Implications

No significant implications. The consultation arrangements and proposals for further formal consultation are in line with regulatory requirements.

7.3 Equality Duty and Human Rights Assessment

A full equality impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached at appendix 3. This has included any relevant considerations arising from the feedback to the consultation. In summary the conclusion is that there will be significant benefits to the proposals overall, especially in relation to the expansion of St Anthony's. This is particularly the case given the positive implications of the proposed changes with respect of supporting provision of more local places for SEND and Alternative Provision to meet the needs of some pupils within their community which currently are not being met.

The consideration of the equality duty was applied both to the process of undertaking the consultation and the analysis of feedback to ensure that due consideration was given to the needs of persons with protected characteristics and the requirements of the public sector equality duty.

7.4 Protecting the Environment

The proposed relocation of Jessie Younghusband Primary School could result in an increase to the levels of pupils travelling in vehicles to schools and thereby leading to increased pollution through vehicles. This will be addressed through the development of the School's Travel Plan. The increased capacity for St Anthony's Special School should mean a lower than expected need to provide out of county SEND places and a consequent reduced need for longer journeys to and from school.

7.5 Crime and Disorder

None.

7.6 Public Health

No significant implications. Opportunities for children to walk or cycle to local school provision will be encouraged through the development of the School's Travel Plan.

7.7 **Social Value**

There is a significant social value in enabling children to have access to school provision within their local community, with all of the benefits of being closer to family and community and the reduced travel for those with special needs having to access schooling out of County.

Claire Hayes

Assistant Director (Education and Skills)

Contact Officer: Graham Olway, Head of Organisation and Planning,
0330 2223029, graham.olway@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1– Summary of responses received to the online consultation

Appendix 2 - Plan of the proposed catchment area changes

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers - None