

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD

4th December 2012

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 CONSULTATION – HADLOW RURAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

To agree a response to a consultation from the Hadlow Rural Community School Trust on proposals to create a secondary Free School at the Hadlow College campus. This is required by Section 10 of the Academies Act 2010.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Hadlow Rural Community School Trust has embarked on a six week consultation regarding their proposals to establish a new secondary Free School at Hadlow. In summary, the proposals are:

- To create a new secondary school for boys and girls from 11 – 16 years of age to be located as part of the Hadlow College Animal Management Unit (AMU) facility off Ashes Lane.
- It is planned to open the school in September 2013 and will accommodate up to 330 pupils. It will initially open with up to 60 pupils in Year 7 and 15 pupils in Year 10 only.
- The schools will aim to be a centre of excellence for learning within a land-based environment with a focus on science. The emphasis will be on a core academic GCSE courses supported by a range of vocational options and qualifications.
- The school will share facilities with Hadlow College, for example, for sport and recreation.
- It is intended to have a new school building in place at the AMU in time for September 2013. However, as a contingency, sufficient accommodation at the existing AMU complex could be made available if is not achieved.

1.2 The Consultation

- 1.2.1 As part of the formal consultation, partners are being asked to express a view on whether the proposed arrangements should be entered into. Given the likely planning and transportation issues involved in the development of a new school building, it is not appropriate for the Borough Council to express a view on any of these issues as part of this consultation. Our comments should therefore be limited to the specific question related to the principle of the creation of a new free school at Hadlow and its potential educational benefits.
- 1.2.2 In educational terms, the creation a new secondary school which focuses on both core educational attainment and vocational opportunities in the land-based sector is to be welcomed. The proposed school will be attractive to those young people who have an interest in taking up careers in that field and for whom a wholly academic secondary education might be less attractive. Many existing secondary schools in the Borough, in response to local needs and pupil preferences, have started to introduce more flexible vocational courses and qualifications which sit alongside their main academic offer. The provision of a new school with this approach as a core element of their overall ethos is therefore complementary to this wider approach.
- 1.2.3 The ability for the new school to draw on the considerable resources and facilities of Hadlow College is a major factor in its favour and its creation will serve to increase the number of secondary school places in an area of the Borough with increasingly high demand.
- 1.2.4 For the above reasons, it is recommended that, without prejudice to the future consideration of any formal planning matters, the Borough Council expresses its formal support in principle for this proposal.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 This is a consultation only.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 N/A

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 N/A

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.6.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 That the Hadlow Rural Community Trust **BE INFORMED** that the Borough Council supports, in principle, proposals for the creation of a new secondary Free School at Hadlow, but reserves its position regarding any formal planning matters that relate to the future construction of the school building and its access arrangements.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	n/a	This is a consultation only at this stage.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	n/a	As above.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.