

Committee: **Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness**  
Date: **6 March 2012**  
Title of Report: **Proposed amalgamation of Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School**  
By: **Director of Children's Services**  
Purpose of Report: **To report changes to the prescribed process for school organisation proposals and to seek approval to publish statutory notices without the prior consent of the Secretary of State**

**Recommendation:**

**The Lead Member is recommended to:**

- i) Authorise the withdrawal of the Section 10 application to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school;**
  - ii) Authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012, and establish a new community primary school on 1 September 2012; and**
  - iii) Delegate authority to The Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.**
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## **1. Background**

1.1 On 8 November 2011 the Lead Member authorised an application to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school without running a competition and, subject to the Secretary of State's approval, authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012, and establish a new community primary school on 1 September 2012. A copy of the 8 November 2011 Lead Member report and minute of the decision is attached as **Appendix A**.

1.2 Under Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 a Local Authority could, with the consent of the Secretary of State, publish proposals to establish a new community primary school. It was under this section that an application was made to the Secretary of State on 6 December 2011.

1.3 On 15 November 2011 the Education Act 2011 received Royal Assent. A number of the Act's provisions took effect immediately, with others being implemented on 15 January 2012 and 1 February 2012. The remainder of the provisions are anticipated to have commenced by the start of the 2012/13 academic year.

1.4 From 1 February 2012 Section 10 has been amended (by Schedule 11 of the Education Act 2011) so that proposals may only be published under that section where the new provisions in Sections 11(A2) or 11(A3) EIA 2006 do not apply (inserted by Schedule 11).

1.5 For Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School, Section 11(A3) will apply, which states:

*"(A3) Where a local authority in England propose to establish a new community, community special, foundation or foundation special school, which –*

*(a) is to be a primary school, and*

*(b) is to replace a maintained infant school and a maintained junior school,  
the authority must publish their proposals under this section."*

1.6 The consequence of the amendments is that Local Authorities no longer require consent from the Secretary of State to publish proposals to replace a maintained infant school and a maintained junior school with a community primary school without a competition.

1.7 Although the application was made prior to 1 February 2012, there are no transitional provisions in the Act which allow the Secretary of State to consider applications made prior to the changes, and the Department for Education has confirmed that the Secretary of State will not determine the Council's application as the proposals can now be published under Section 11(A3) EIA 2006.

## **2. Other relevant matters**

2.1 There is continued objection to the proposals and a demonstration took place at County Hall on 14 February 2012, attended by approximately 30 people. Attached as **Appendix B** is copy of a 'Save our School' leaflet handed to Lead Member at the rally.

2.2 Despite the ongoing objection to the proposals, the County Council continues to believe that amalgamation of Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School will bring about improved teaching and learning and achieve higher standards at Key Stage 2, and will secure a smoother and more effective transition between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 through a consistent single ethos and common policies to teaching and learning, behaviour and monitoring pupil progress.

## **3. Conclusion and reason for recommendation**

3.1 In light of the change in legislation from 1 February 2012 and the County Council's continued belief that amalgamation is the right way forward to ensure improved standards and quality of provision in Peacehaven, Lead Member is recommended to:

- i) Authorise the withdrawal of the Section 10 application to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school;
- ii) Authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012, and establish a new community primary school on 1 September 2012; and
- iii) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.

**MATT DUNKLEY**  
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Penny Gaunt, Deputy Director of Children's Services  
Tel: 01273 481112  
Local Members: Councillor Livings and Councillor Howson  
Background Documents: None

Committee:	<b>Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness</b>
Date:	<b>8 November 2011</b>
Title of Report:	<b>Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School</b>
By:	<b>Director of Children's Services</b>
Purpose of Report:	<b>To report the outcome of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School, and to seek approval to move to the next stage of the statutory process.</b>

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**Recommendation:**

**The Lead Member is recommended to:**

- (1) Authorise an application to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school without running a competition;**
  - (2) Subject to the Secretary of State's approval, authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012, and establish a new community primary school on 1 September 2012 and delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to amend the proposals prior to their publication; and**
  - (3) Authorise the establishment of a temporary governing body for the proposed new primary school in anticipation of approval of the proposals and delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to agree the arrangements for the establishment of the temporary governing body.**
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**1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 Both schools form part of the Peacehaven Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract and as such there will be revenue funding implications from changing the existing contractual arrangements. The cost is expected to be in the region of £30,000 but if the figure becomes cost prohibitive this will be reported to Lead Member as part of the next stage of the statutory process.

**2. Background**

2.1 On 8 June 2011 Lead Member approved public consultation on a proposal to bring Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School together as a new all-through primary school, through a process known as amalgamation.

2.2 In line with the Council's Primary Review Policy a proposal to amalgamate the two schools was consulted on. The Primary Review Policy sets out the Council's ambition to create all-through primary schools where possible and the criteria which would lead to proposals to amalgamate infant and junior schools. The relevant criterion in this instance is that Peacehaven Infant School does not currently have a substantive Headteacher.

2.3 The amalgamation would involve the closure of both Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012 and the establishment of a new all-through primary school operating across the two existing school sites from 1 September 2012.

2.4 This report analyses the responses received during the consultation period and seeks approval to move to the next stage of the statutory process.

**3. Outcome of the public consultation**

3.1 Proposed changes to the organisation of schools have to follow a prescribed process established by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation

(Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). This process complied with these requirements.

3.2 The consultation took place over a 6 week period between 5 September and 17 October 2011. 1,600 copies of the consultation document were distributed. The document was also made available on the ESCC website. As part of the consultation a public meeting was held on 27 September 2011 and playground 'drop-in' sessions were also held at each school to give parents an opportunity to discuss the proposals with officers from the Council.

3.3 In total 750 responses were received. Of these 4.1% supported the proposal to amalgamate with 95.2% not in support.

3.4 The main concerns raised by respondents included: that transition arrangements between the two schools are already good; that there would be little benefit if the new school remains on two sites; that there would be a loss of teaching time and safety concerns about children walking between the two sites; that the proposal is only about saving money; that the proposal removes choice as Peacehaven already has two all-through primary schools and that Peacehaven Infant School is a good school so why change it. Some agreed that the proposal would lead to continuity of teaching, standards and management but said that one site would be favourable.

3.5 In addition to the consultation responses, the Council also received 475 individually signed 'Save our School' (Peacehaven Infant School) letters objecting to the proposal. Copies of the petition have been placed in the Members' Room for information.

3.6 **Appendix 1** to this report provides detailed analysis of the consultation process and responses received.

## **4 Next Steps**

4.1 Lead Member has a number of options in reaching a decision. These are:

- To continue with the proposal;
- To reject the proposal;
- To modify the proposal;
- To adopt any other option raised during the consultation

4.2 There are specific statutory requirements for the establishment of any new maintained schools. Where the Authority wishes to see a new maintained school established it must invite proposals for the school as provided for in section 7 of the EIA 2006 and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). This process is generally referred to as a "competition".

4.3 The final decision on competition proposals must be taken by the Council except where it wishes to make its own proposal for a community school in the competition. The Council would require Secretary of State's consent to publish its own proposals. In this instance the final decision would be taken by the Schools Adjudicator.

4.4 However, in the case of community infant and junior school amalgamations, there is a presumption for approval to publish proposals without holding a competition. The final decision on amalgamation must be taken by the Schools Adjudicator.

4.5 The Council may make arrangements for the temporary governing body of the proposed new primary school to be set up after statutory notices have been published and prior to approval of the proposals, pursuant to the School Governance (New Schools) (England) Regulations 2007. This step would facilitate the setting up of the new school as quickly as possible. This would not pre-judge the outcome of the eventual decision as to whether to approve the proposals to be made by the Schools Adjudicator. The process could be stopped at any time. It is expected that the temporary governing body would include some existing governors from each school

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

5.1 Amalgamation is being proposed to improve teaching and learning and achieve higher standards at Key Stage 2, and to secure a smoother and more effective transition between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 through a consistent single ethos and common policies to teaching and learning, behaviour and monitoring pupil progress.

5.2 Despite the concerns raised during the consultation period, it is the Council's belief that amalgamation is the right way forward to ensure improved standards and quality of provision. **Appendix 2** to this report describes the overall educational rationale supporting this proposal.

5.3 **Appendix 3** includes further information to support the proposal but contains exempt information. This is set out as a later item on the agenda.

5.4 Given the presumption for infant and junior school amalgamations to be approved without a competition, it is proposed that an application be submitted to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school. This is supported by the fact that 35.1% of respondents would like to see the Council establish the proposed new school without a competition. A further 18.4% did not express a view. It can therefore be assumed that the majority of respondents (53.5%) would be happy for the Council to establish the proposed new school as a community school without a competition.

5.5 For the reasons above, Lead Member is recommended to:

(1) Authorise an application to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school without running a competition;

(2) Subject to the Secretary of State's approval, authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012, and establish a new community primary school on 1 September 2012 and delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to amend the proposals prior to their publication;

(3) Authorise the establishment of a temporary governing body for the proposed new primary school in anticipation of approval of the proposals and delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to agree the arrangements for the establishment of the temporary governing body.

MATT DUNKLEY

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Penny Gaunt, Deputy Director, Children's Services

Tel: 01273 481660

Local Members: Councillors Howson and Livings

Background Documents: None

## ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

### 1. Background:

1.1 East Sussex County Council undertook an informal consultation between 5 September and 17 October 2011 on a proposal to amalgamate Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School. The proposal would involve the closure of the existing schools on 31 August 2012 and the establishment of a new all-through community primary school on 1 September 2012.

1.2 It is proposed that the new school would operate across the two existing sites.

### 2. Purpose of report:

2.1 This report is in two parts:

- Part 1: the consultation process
- Part 2: analysis of the consultation responses

### 3. Part 1: the consultation process:

3.1 One thousand six hundred (1,600) consultation documents were distributed in accordance with The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Consultees included for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools in Peacehaven and Newhaven; the local MP; the District Council; diocesan bodies and local Early Years providers. The full distribution list is provided in Table 1 below. The consultation document explained the proposal and provided a range of means to respond. These included: by freepost reply, online questionnaire or by emailing East Sussex County Council. The consultation document was also made available on the County Council's website.

Table 1: Consultation distribution list

Organisation	Number of Copies
Peacehaven Infant School - pupils & parents/carers	180
Peacehaven Infant School - staff	40
Peacehaven Infant School - Governing Body	15
Peacehaven Infant School - spares for main entrance	30
Peacehaven Infant School - additional copies distributed	300
Hodder Junior School - pupils & parents/carers	240
Hodder Junior School - staff	50
Hodder Junior School - Governing Body	20
Hodder Junior School - spares for main entrance	30
Meridian Primary School, Peacehaven	15
Telscombe Cliffs Community Primary School	15
Denton Community Primary Primary School	15
Grays School, Newhaven	15
Meeching Valley Primary School, Newhaven	15
Southdown Junior School, Newhaven	15
Peacehaven Community School	15
Tideway School, Newhaven	15
ESCC councillors	50
SMT/COMT	15
Headteacher's Strategic Boards	2
Simon Kirby MP	5
Department for Education	1
Brighton & Hove City Council	1
Lewes District Council - chief officers and councillors	50
Peacehaven Town Council - Town Clerk	20
Diocese of Chichester (Church of England)	5
Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (Catholic)	5
Rowe Avenue Surgery	30
Foxhill Medical Centre	30
Meridian Way Surgery	30
Central Surgery	30

Organisation cont.	Number of Copies
Sussex Voluntary and Community Learning Consortium	10
Peacehaven Library	30
Trade Unions	9
Peacehaven Children's Centre	30
Butterfly Nursery	15
Happy Days Nursery	15
Hopscotch Nursery	15
Telescombe Cliffs Nursery	15
Spares used for consultation events	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>1600</b>

3.2 A range of consultation meetings were held to provide staff, governors and the public with further information and evidence of the benefits of amalgamation, and to discuss and answer any questions raised by these groups. Below is a brief synopsis of each meeting.

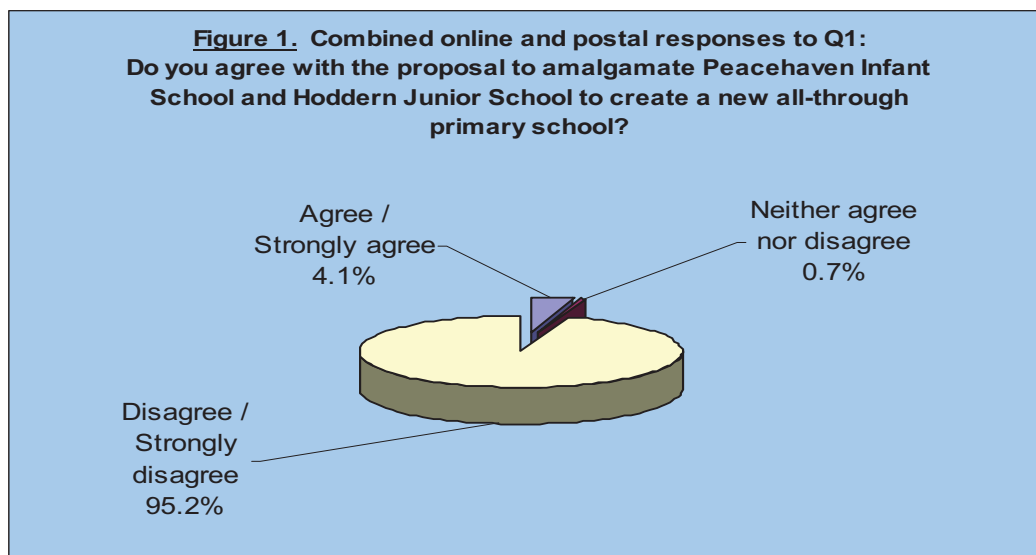
- Staff meeting at Peacehaven Infant School on 12 September 2011. The meeting was attended by 3 officers from ESCC and union representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the staffing implications and processes if amalgamation went ahead.
- Staff meeting at Hoddern Junior School on 13 September 2011. The meeting was attended by 3 officers from ESCC and union representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the staffing implications and processes if amalgamation went ahead.
- Playground consultation at Peacehaven Infant School on Tuesday 20 September 2011. The session was attended by 2 officers from ESCC. In the main, the parents we spoke to were against the proposals.
- Playground consultation at Hoddern Junior School on Wednesday 21 September 2011. The session was attended by 3 officers from ESCC. There was a mixed response from parents to the proposals.
- Public meeting at Peacehaven Community School on Tuesday 27 September 2011. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting, of which only approximately 20 had children at one or both schools. The meeting was facilitated by 8 officers from ESCC. Concerns were raised about the proposals and there was some conflict between parents of the two schools during the meeting. There was a high level of questioning and debate during the meeting.

#### 4. Part 2: analysis of responses:

4.1 Question 1 on the questionnaire asked people to indicate whether they agreed with the proposal to amalgamate Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School to create a new all-through primary school. 750 people responded to this question, of which:

- 31 (4.1%) supported the proposal (2.5% strongly agreed)
- 5 (0.7%) neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 714 (95.2%) did not support the proposal (90.3% strongly disagreed)

4.2 Figure 1 below shows the breakdown of responses as a pie chart. From this it is clear that the majority of respondents were opposed to the proposal.

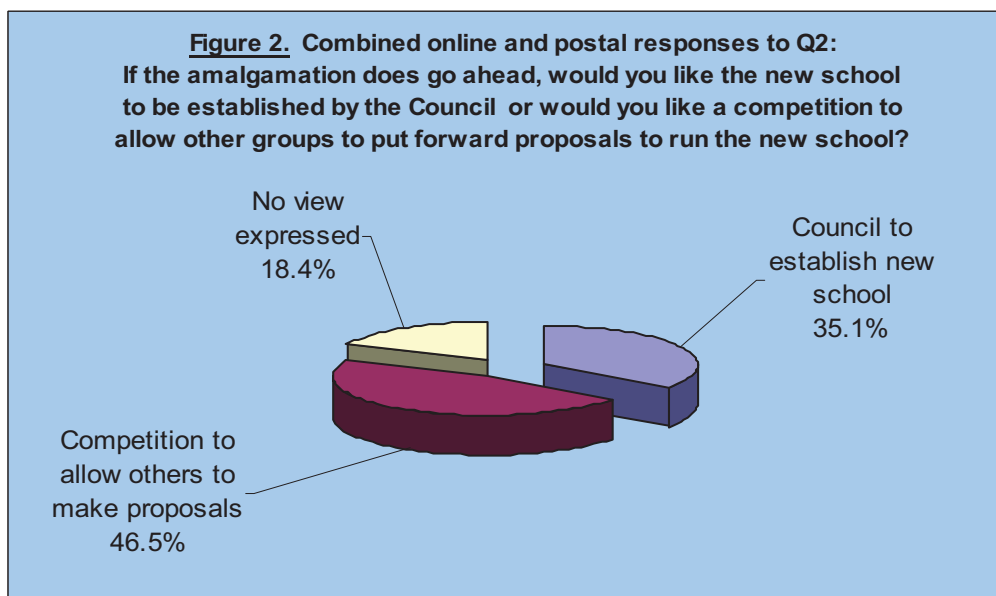


4.3 It is interesting to note that of the 1600 consultation documents distributed, 484 (30.3%) responded using the paper questionnaires and 266 (16.6%) responded online. This equates to an overall response rate of 46.9%.

4.4 Question 2 asked people to indicate, if the amalgamation goes ahead, would they would like the new school established by the Council without a competition, or would they like a competition to allow other groups to put forward proposals to run the new school:

- 263 (35.1%) wish to see the Council establish the new school
- 349 (46.5%) wish to see the new school established through a competition
- 138 (18.4%) did not express a view

4.5 Figure 2 below shows the data as a pie chart. From this it can be assumed that the majority (53.5%) are happy for the Council to establish the new school, subject to the Secretary of State's approval.



4.6 Question 3 asked people to give reasons for their answers to questions 1 and/or 2 above. The main areas of concern were: that transition arrangements between the two schools are already good; that there would be little benefit if the new school remains on two sites; that there would be a loss of teaching time and safety concerns about children walking between the two sites; that the proposal is only about saving money; that the proposal removes choice as Peacehaven already has 2 all-through primary schools and that Peacehaven Infant School is a good school so



why change it. Some agreed that the proposal would lead to continuity of teaching, standards and management but said that one site would be favourable.

4.7 Table 2 below summarises the comments received. A full list of responses is available for inspection.

Table 2: Summary of main comments:

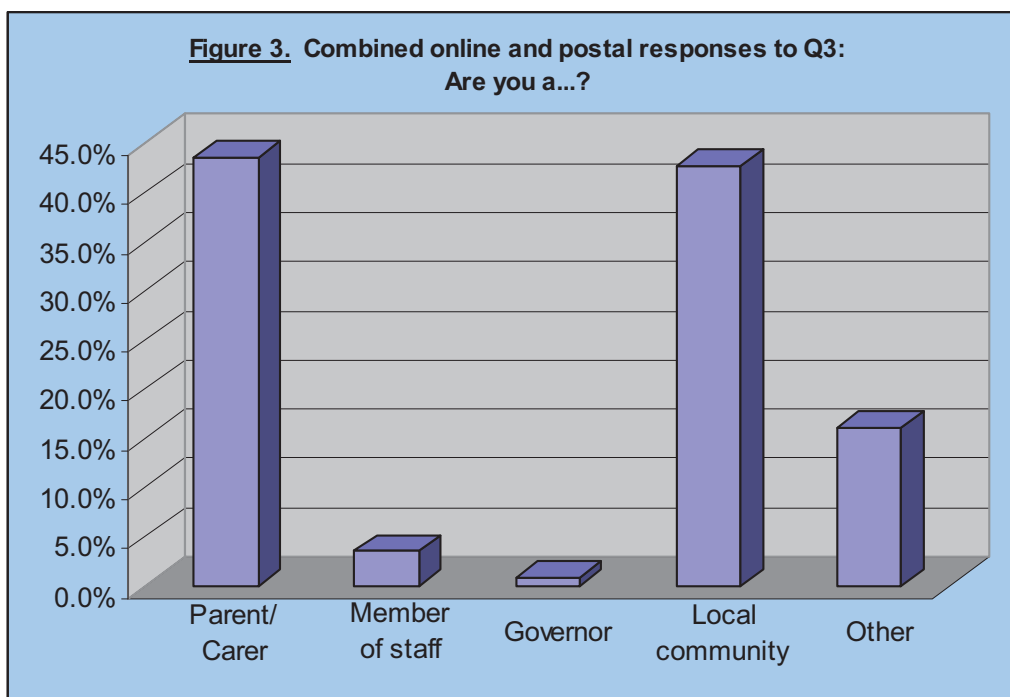
Comment summary	
1	Transition - Peacehaven already has a good programme in place to prepare children for transition to Junior school. The schools have a good relationship.
2	Peacehaven Infant School has a good team and staff - they build strong relationships with the children and parents which would be lost.
3	Not practical to have one headteacher between 2 sites - would not be able to run the 2 schools to such high standards. Responsibilities would be torn between sites. Time consuming and impractical.
4	It's a money saving project.
5	Peacehaven Infant School is a small, nurturing and friendly school which would be lost if amalgamated (this is one of the main reasons people chose Peacehaven Infant School for their children).
6	Not ideal to have children walking between 2 sites - unsafe and loss of teaching time.
7	The proposal would incur additional and unnecessary costs - PFI contract could be broken - fines to be paid.
8	As long as the schools remain on 2 sites it won't make huge improvements but could be a step towards bringing the schools on to one site.
9	There is nothing wrong with Peacehaven Infant School so why change it.
10	Opening up competition could jeopardise what is already in existence.
11	Choice of schools will be reduced as Peacehaven and Telscombe already have 2 all-through primary schools.
12	Moving staff between Key Stages would take away specialism.
13	Agree. Continuity of teaching, standards and management, but one site would be favourable.
14	Infants could be daunted by a bigger school and older children.

4.8 In answer to question 4 the respondents classified themselves as:

- 326 (43.5%) were parents/carers of children at Peacehaven Infant and /or Hoddern Junior
- 26 (3.5%) were members of staff at Peacehaven Infant or Hoddern Junior
- 7 (0.9%) were Governors at Peacehaven Infant School and/or Hoddern Junior
- 320 (42.7%) were members of the local community
- 120 (16%) were classed as other

4.9 Interestingly, only 26 members of staff and 7 governors responded to the consultation. This assumes that the majority of staff and governors do not have a view either way about the proposal.

4.10 The responses to question 4 totalled 799. This is because some respondents ticked more than one box. Figure 3 below shows the breakdown as a bar chart.



4.11 In addition to the consultation responses, the Council also received 475 individually signed ‘Save our School’ (Peacehaven Infant School) letters objecting to the proposal. Copies of the petition have been placed in the members’ room for information.

4.12 ‘About you’ questions. We collect this information to ensure that we are seeking the views of everyone in our community and to demonstrate that we are complying with relevant diversity and equalities legislation. The responses to the ‘About you’ questions are available for inspection.

4.13 A copy of the consultation document is provided below.

eastsussex.gov.uk



September 2011

**Have your say on the proposal to amalgamate Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School to create a new all-through primary school**

**The consultation runs from 5 September to 17 October 2011.**





### **What is the proposal?**

The proposal is to create a new primary school from the 2012/13 academic year through the bringing together (known as amalgamation) of Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School. The new primary school would admit up to 60 pupils a year (the same number as currently admitted to the infant school) and would be on the sites of the existing infant and junior schools. The proposal allows for the continuation of the existing nursery and special education facilities.

It is important to note that all the pupils who would be attending Peacehaven Infant School or Hoddern Junior School at the time of amalgamation would automatically become part of the new primary school.

The new school would have a single governing body and a single headteacher who would be responsible for the effective education of all children throughout their time at the school.

This consultation document is for parents/carers, staff, governors, the local community and other interested parties. The Council will consider all the views put forward during the consultation before it decides whether to continue with the proposal to amalgamate. East Sussex County Council welcomes your views on this proposal.

### **What does 'amalgamation' mean?**

This process would mean that Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School would both close on the same day and a new primary school would be established the following day. The new school's age range would be 4-11 (Reception Year to Year 6).

### **What is the background to this proposal?**

Currently pupils attend Peacehaven Infant School for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum, and Hoddern Junior School for Key Stage 2. Governing bodies and headteachers are responsible for standards of behaviour, attendance, attainment and achievement within these Key Stages. Maintaining two separate schools means that children change schools part way through their primary education.

Peacehaven Infant School was inspected by Ofsted in February 2010 at which time the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be 'good'. In 2010, the school achieved below East Sussex and national averages in all subjects, with the exception of reading which matched the East Sussex average at Level 2B+.

The number on roll in 2010/11 was 174 against a capacity of 180. First preferences for Peacehaven Infant School have declined from 61 in 2009 to 45 in 2011.

Following the departure of the previous headteacher, an acting head was appointed in April 2011 to support the school.

Hoddern Junior School was inspected by Ofsted in October 2009. The school's overall effectiveness was judged to be 'satisfactory'. In 2010, the percentage of children achieving Level 4 attainment or above and the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 attainment or above was generally below East Sussex and National averages, except in Mathematics which matched the East Sussex average for Level 4+.

The number on roll in 2010/11 was 218 against a capacity of 240. First preferences for Hoddern Junior School have fallen from 50 in 2009 to 43 in 2011.

### **How would this proposal benefit children?**

The Council believes that amalgamation would provide clear benefits for pupils' learning. This is because a single primary school would have the following advantages:

- a single governing body and headteacher would offer better continuity and a smoother transition between KS1 and KS2;
- single policies for teaching and learning, behaviour and maintaining pupil progress which would enhance pupils' learning and development;
- greater opportunities for curriculum development, and staff recruitment and development;



- builds upon best practice within both the infant and junior schools, as part of a fresh start, and to continue improving standards of pupil achievement and attainment;
- enables more of the budget to be spent upon front-line teaching and learning since overheads are a smaller proportion of the school budget;
- allows parents to only apply once for the school (before Reception) without having to reapply at the end of Key Stage 1;
- the relationship between parents and the school can build over a longer period of time, allowing the school to better understand the needs of each pupil; and
- practical benefits through, for example, the same INSET days and uniform for KS1 and KS2.

#### **What would this proposal mean for staff?**

A larger single school provides the opportunity for a more specialist staffing and management structure, greater opportunity for staff development, and enables greater flexibility in the deployment of staff to support the individual needs of pupils.

#### **How would governance of the schools be affected?**

A Temporary Governing Body (TGB) would be set up to oversee the creation of the new Primary School and this would include representation from the governing body of each current school. The TGB would appoint the headteacher and then develop the staffing structure, agree the name and uniform of the new Primary School, and approve the policies and procedures for the new school.

#### **Would it be possible to enable the new school to be on one site?**

This proposal is about establishing a structure that is most likely to support high pupil attainment. The Council believes an all-through primary on two sites with consistent policies and practice will provide a better quality of education through the whole of the primary phase than separate infant and junior schools.

It is not currently the Council's intention to develop a single site given the high quality of provision on the existing sites.

#### **What are the financial implications of amalgamation?**

The proposal for amalgamation is being made because of educational reasons, not financial reasons. The education budget that the Council receives from government is 'ring-fenced' and can only be spent on education – so there is no saving to the Council through amalgamation. The budget for each individual school is determined by a formula that includes some amounts for every school but most is determined by the number of pupils. Existing primary schools in East Sussex which are the same size as the proposed new school provide effective education within their budgets.

#### **How would the new school be established and when would it open?**

The Council would wish to secure the benefits of an all-through primary school as soon as possible. There are two ways that a new school could be established:

Firstly, the Council could run a competition where any interested groups could put forward their proposals for the new primary school. These groups could consist of parents, teachers, faith groups, or other educational organisations (such as a University or school). A competition process would take more time to run and this could mean that the new school would not open until possibly September 2013.

Alternatively, the Council could apply for permission from the Secretary of State to open the new primary school without holding a competition. The Council believes that where existing community infant and junior schools come together parents would prefer the new school to also be a community school. A new community school would receive its funding from East Sussex County Council, staff would be employed by the Council, and the admissions policy would remain the same as it is for all other community schools. This process would also be quicker, and the new school could potentially open in September 2012.

We would welcome your views as to whether you think the new school should be established by the Council as a community school or possibly by an alternative provider through a competition.

### Who makes the decision and when?

The Council will consider all the views expressed during the consultation. It then has several choices and the next steps would depend on what decision was taken. Following the consideration of the consultation responses the Council could choose to:

- Stop the process - in this case the separate infant and junior schools would remain and the infant school would appoint a new headteacher;
- Change the proposal - in this case the next steps would depend on what the changed proposal was;
- Continue with a competition - if the Secretary of State required a competition to allow interested parties to put forward their proposals, this would possibly run between spring and summer 2012 with any received proposals being available for comment probably during autumn 2012. Unless it decided to enter the competition, the Council would make the final decision, perhaps in early 2013. If the Council chose to enter the competition, the final decision would be made by the independent Schools Adjudicator, possibly during spring 2013, with the aim of opening the new school in September 2013.
- Continue without a competition - if the Council was granted permission to establish the new school without a competition the Statutory Notices for the closure of the existing schools and the opening of the new school would probably be available for comment in early 2012. All comments would be sent to the independent Schools Adjudicator who would make the final decision, possibly during spring 2012, with the aim of opening the new school in September 2012.

### Who is being consulted?

The Council is consulting with pupils, parents and carers, governing bodies of Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School, staff, other local schools and trade unions. We are also consulting with a wide range of other groups including the district council, the local MP, the Church of England and Catholic diocesan boards and the wider local community.

### How do I have my say?

This consultation runs until **17 October 2011**.

You can give your views by:

- Completing the attached questionnaire and returning it by freepost in the envelope provided
- Completing the online questionnaire at: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultation](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultation)
- Emailing the County Council at [schoolsamp@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsamp@eastsussex.gov.uk)
- Attending the public meeting at Peacehaven Community School on Tuesday 27 September 2011 between 6.30 and 8pm
- Attending the playground 'drop in' sessions at Peacehaven Infant School on Tuesday 20 September 2011 from 2.45pm or at Hoddern Junior School on Wednesday 21 September 2011 from 2.50pm

## Consultation – Response Form

Our proposal is to amalgamate Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School to create a new all-through primary school from the 2012/13 academic year.

The County Council would welcome your views on its proposal. Please fill in this response form and return it to the address overleaf no later than 17 October 2011.

**Q1. Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School to create a new all-through primary school?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Q2. If the amalgamation does go ahead, would you like the new school to be established by the Council without a competition, or would you like a competition to allow other groups to put forward proposals to run the new school?**

- Council to establish the new school without a competition
- A competition to allow any interested group to put forward proposals to run the new school

**Q3. If you wish, please give your main reasons for your answer to Q1 and/or Q2 above, or any other comments about this proposal:**

**Q4. Are you a...?**

- Parent / carer of a child at Peacehaven Infant and/or Hoddern Junior schools
- Member of staff at either Peacehaven Infant or Hoddern Junior schools
- Governor at Peacehaven Infant and/or Hoddern Junior schools
- Member of the local community
- Other (please say) \_\_\_\_\_

**About you ...**We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally and that no one gets left out. That's why we ask you these questions. We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We will only use it to help us make decisions and make our services better.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

**Q5. Are you.....?**  Male  Female  Prefer not to say

**Q6 Do you identify as a transgender or trans person?**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

**Q7. How old are you?**

**Q8. What is your postcode?**

**Q9. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong ?** (Source 2011 census)

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
<input type="checkbox"/> British	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> African
<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

\*Other Ethnic Group If your ethnic group was not specified in the list please describe your ethnic group:

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

**Q10. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

**Q11. If you answered yes to Q, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.**

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these apply to you please select other and write in the type of impairment you have.

- Physical impairment  Mental health condition  
 Sensory impairment (hearing and sight)  Learning disability  
 Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy  
 Other, please specify  Prefer not to say

**Q12. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

**Q13. If you answered yes to Qxx which one?**

Christian  Hindu  Muslim  Any other religion, please specify

Buddhist  Jewish  Sikh

**Q14. Are you...?**

Bi/Bisexual  Gay woman/Lesbian  Other  
 Heterosexual/Straight  Gay Man  Prefer not to say

**Thank you for providing this information, your feedback is important to us.**



**EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE:**

This educational rationale supports the proposal to continue the process for amalgamation of Hoddern Junior and Peacehaven Infant schools to create a new all-through primary school on two sites.

In September 2011, during the consultation period for the proposed amalgamation of Hoddern Junior and Peacehaven Infants schools, Ofsted published *Leadership of more than one school*. This is a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of federated schools. This Ofsted document further reinforces the East Sussex primary review policy, revised in November 2010.

In *Leadership of more than one school*, Ofsted focus on the impact of federation arrangements. They report that in the case of cross-phase federations, federation had resulted in stronger academic transition procedures between schools. Of particular note are observations around closer transition arrangements for pupils and effective transfer of information and pupil records between schools. Strong and meaningful comparisons can be drawn from the federation study findings to other partnership arrangements, such as amalgamation, where one headteacher is responsible for the full primary age range frequently over more than one school site.

The overall educational rationale for the proposal draws on evidence included in the Ofsted report and relates directly to the East Sussex Primary Review policy. The key drivers of this East Sussex policy are:

- the commitment of members to maintaining a sustainable network of village schools, where each school's viability and capacity to improve is robust
- the need to develop strategies to manage a shortfall in applications for Primary Headteacher vacancies, in order to secure high quality Headteacher appointments and secure leadership solutions for all schools
- the need to address the relative standards at Key Stage 2 of all-through Primary schools compared with Junior schools, in order to raise standards

The proposals for Peacehaven Infant and Hoddern Junior schools relate firstly, to the headteacher vacancy at Peacehaven Infants and secondly, to historic standards issues at East Sussex junior schools and currently at Hoddern Junior in particular.

**Research:**

The Ofsted study is based on visits to 61 schools in 29 federations that shared leadership (Oct 2010-Feb 2011). Inspectors scrutinised school assessment information and pupils' work, observed lessons and met with pupils and staff. In addition, they examined questionnaire returns and analysed inspection judgements from 102 of the schools within these federations that had been inspected by Ofsted three years after federation. At least 12 of these federations have amalgamated since 2009, involving the closure of schools.

Ofsted report that in all the federations visited, provision and outcomes had shown improvement; and in each case, the fact that schools had federated was a contributory factor to the improvement. In the federations where weaker schools had joined forces with stronger ones, the key areas of improvement were in teaching and learning, pupils' behaviour and achievement.

In the case of cross-phase federations between, for example, primary and secondary or infant and junior schools, Ofsted report that federation had resulted in stronger academic

transition procedures between schools. This meant less disruption to the progress made by pupils.

The key findings of the Ofsted study are:

- Effective leadership was the single most critical feature that helped to generate improvements and build capacity for the partnerships to be sustained. This leadership was underpinned by rigorous procedures for holding staff accountable by checking the quality of provision and, in particular, assessing the quality of teaching and learning.
- The partnerships resulted in:
  - Improvements in teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour
  - A single system of assessing and tracking pupil progress
  - An enriched curriculum and a greater range of opportunities and extra-curricular activities.
  - Greater capacity to meet pupils' needs flexibly and swiftly.
- Where the federated arrangements enabled pupils to transfer from one phase to another, academic transition was greatly enhanced by a common approach to teaching, learning and assessment between schools.
- Where the leadership was judged by inspectors to be good or outstanding the partnerships exhibited some common features:
  - a clear vision and good communication of the benefits that federation brought to pupils, driven by the headteacher, but shared by others;
  - well-developed strategic plans with success criteria shared with all staff; rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the federation and holding staff to account;
  - well-established procedures for, and a belief in the importance of, developing and coaching leaders at all levels; and continued professional development of staff.
- A clear vision of the potential benefits of federation was an important characteristic for success.
- Where the local authority facilitated the process of federation effectively, particularly during the early stages, it provided valuable expertise and guidance.
- The biggest potential barrier to federation resulted from concerns from parents, pupils and staff about what the changes would mean to them. Ofsted report that the federation conversion process was not always easy. Barriers experienced by nearly all of the federations visited could be split into two groups:
  - concerns expressed by staff and parents about how the changing arrangements would affect them and their children. (These had been successfully overcome in nearly all the federations seen by good communication and consultation)
  - logistics of partnership, such as financial matters and distance between schools. (In some of the federations surveyed, the role of business manager or bursar had grown in importance and was instrumental in overcoming these barriers.)

A previous report by Ofsted (Evaluation of the Primary and Secondary National Strategies 2005–07 Ofsted, 2008) which evaluated the primary and secondary national strategies, found that pastoral transition arrangements between phases were generally

much stronger than academic transitions. However, the difference in the federated schools visited during the survey was that they had strengthened the academic transition arrangements so that there was much less disruption to pupils' learning than there had been prior to federation. This is illustrated in the following example: *Prior to the federation of one infant and junior school in 2005, pupils in Year 3 made slow progress; each year the attainment of 40-50% of pupils in reading and writing was low. The federation resolved the issue of the slow progress made in Year 3 (Key Stage 2) by establishing phase leadership that spanned Key Stages 1 and 2. This resulted in consistent year on year improvements to progress, so that in the 2010 Year 3 cohort, there were less than 10% of pupils whose attainment in reading and writing was low.*

Five federations visited (5/29) and questionnaire responses from additional federations, identified the geographical distance between schools as a potential barrier to successful federation. Two main reasons were given for the distance being a barrier, these were:

- the physical difficulty of distance for staff who may need to work together travelling between sites, and for the headteacher needing to have a presence on two sites
- in three federations visited the schools, while recognising the benefits of federation, wanted to maintain their own identity. For example, in two federations schools were in separate villages and wanted to retain their places in the heart of the community.

However, as cited by Ofsted these difficulties were not reported as being insurmountable. In all cases the solution was similar; each school had a recognised leader who maintained the day-to-day management of the school and communication with parents and a federation executive headteacher who took the strategic federation lead.

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Children and Adult Services  
Learning and School Effectiveness  
Children and Families

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Children's and Adult Services – Councillor David Elkin, the Lead Member for Children and Families – Councillor Colin Belsey and the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness – Councillor Nick Bennett on Tuesday 8 November 2011 at County Hall, Lewes

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### **18. CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF PEACEHAVEN INFANT SCHOOL AND HODDERN JUNIOR SCHOOL**

18.1 The Lead Members considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which reported the outcome of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School, and sought approval to move on to the next stage of the statutory process. The Lead Members also considered the exempt information as set out in a later report on the agenda.

#### **DECISION**

18.2 **RESOLVED** (1) to authorise an application to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals for a new community primary school without running a competition; and

(2) subject to the Secretary of state's approval, to authorise the publication of statutory notices to close Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School on 31 August 2012 and establish a new community primary school on 1 September 2012 and delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to amend the proposals prior to their publication; and

(3) to authorise the establishment of a temporary governing body for the proposed new primary school in anticipation of approval of the proposals and delegate to the director of Children's Services authority to agree the arrangements for the establishment of the temporary governing body.

#### **Reason**

18.3 Amalgamation is proposed to improve teaching and learning and to achieve higher standards at Key Stage 2, and to secure a smoother and more effective transition between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 through a consistent single ethos and common policies to teaching and learning, behaviour and monitoring pupil progress. The proposal is in line with the Primary Review Policy which states the Council's ambition to create all-through primary schools where possible.

WE LOVE OUR SCHOOL



PEACEHAVEN INFANTS

# YOU SAID

That the consultation would be a  
**Meaningful Process**

# WE SAY

**750 responses**

**31 responses in favour 4.1%**

**5 responses neither in favour or against  
0.7%**

**714 Against the proposal to amalgamate  
95.2%**

**You ignored 714 votes**

**This was not a fair meaningful  
consultation**

**475 signed petitions**

**ALSO IGNORED**

# YOU SAID

A single governing body and Head teacher will offer better continuity and a smoother transition between Key Stages 1 and 2.

**We disagree; there is limited scope for improvement as both Schools already work very closely together to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.**

This has been mentioned by ESCC in the past.

# YOU SAID

Single policies for teaching and learning, behaviour and maintaining pupil progress would be an advantage of amalgamation.

**We already operate under the same guide lines and policies. Both schools also work together now on curriculum projects like 2020.**



# YOU SAID

There would be greater opportunities for curriculum development, staff recruitment and development.

**This will only be possible if you have a plan to change the current staff resource make up.**

# YOU SAID

Builds upon best practice within in both the Infant and the Junior schools, as part of a fresh start and to continue improving standards of pupil achievement and attainment

**Deployment of best practice is already in place and the potential for disruption to pupils and staff as a direct result of this proposal would more likely have the effect of reducing standards in the short term and recovery is far more difficult than maintenance.**

# YOU SAID

Enables more of the budget, to be spent on front line teaching and learning, since overheads are a smaller proportion of the school budgets.

**This would suggest that there would be reductions in administration and support roles, although the potential for duplication of resource between schools is minimal, particularly as they remain on split sites. The budget would be higher due to pay to executive Head being higher. More responsibility for Deputy Heads would require more budgets. The process already glossy voting slips that have been ignored, new letter heading for**

**schools will be a strain on an already tight budget and tax payers monies how do you justify that.**

## **YOU SAID**

**Allows parents to only apply once for the school (before reception) without having to reapply at the end of Key stage 1:**

**Although the majority of children do go on to Hoddern, not all do and this potentially reduces that choice.**

## **YOU SAID**

**Practical benefits through the same INSET days and uniform for Key Stage 1 and 2.**

**We already schedule the same INSET dates and many of those are joint days between the schools. If your proposal goes ahead every child in both schools will require a new uniform, not just those moving from years 2 to 3.**

# WE SAY

- **Our fundamental belief is that amalgamation will ultimately destroy the friendly nurturing environment that the Peacehaven Infants school has striven for years to achieve. This is one of the main reasons we chose this school for our children.**
- **The Infant school is unique in its ethos which is specifically structured for this age group. This has been praised by parents and Ofsted.**
- **County argue that the transition process for Year 2 children will be less traumatic under amalgamation – however, the new primary school will remain split over 2 sites so Year 2 children will continue to have to move sites when entering Year 3. There is already a very successful and effective transition programme in place for Year 2 children.**
- **The Infant School and Hodderm already work very closely together with joint training and development opportunities for staff and joint events for children.**
- **County also argue that under amalgamation the school will operate with one executive Head which will improve consistency in school policy and results at KS2. Again as the school will be split over 2 sites, there is little merit to this argument.**

# WE SAY

- **Currently due to Hoddern being under the focus due to underperformance requiring extra assistance although not yet in special measures any head teacher, would remain focussed on that school.**
- **Statistical evidence for schools in the same position as ourselves is limited.**
- **The school is currently rated as “Good” with elements of outstanding- there are no concerns regarding the school either with Ofsted or County.**
- **This whole process will undermine and destabilise the school.**

# SAVE OUR SCHOOL



# PEACEHAVEN INFANTS

WE LOVE OUR SCHOOL

