

Committee:	<b>Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness</b>
Date:	<b>19 June 2012</b>
Title of Report:	<b>Primary school reorganisation in Crowborough</b>
By:	<b>Director of Children's Services</b>
Purpose of Report:	<b>To seek Lead Member approval to commence statutory consultation procedures in respect of a proposal to reorganise Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School in Crowborough.</b>

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**Recommendation:**

**The Lead Member is recommended to authorise the commencement of statutory consultation procedures in respect of a proposal to reorganise Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School in Crowborough**

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**1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1. Revenue: these proposals will not affect the schools' formula more generally, although they will affect the budget position of individual schools, which will be redeployed into a single budget.

1.2. Capital: capital investment will not be required to implement the proposals, other than for items such as new signage which will be met within existing resources.

**2. Supporting information**

2.1 The November 2010 Policy and Consultation Procedures for Primary Review sets out the County Council's ambition to create all-through primary schools where possible and the criteria on which proposals should be based to bring infant and junior schools together.

2.2 In this instance, Herne Junior School was given a notice to improve by Ofsted in June 2009. As a result, the local authority assisted the school in federating with Whitehill Infant School in September 2009. Through the federation, the two schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body.

2.3 In June 2010, Herne Junior School was rated as satisfactory and its capacity for sustained improvement was regarded as good. In their report, Ofsted remarked that:  
*"...Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The high expectations set by the headteacher, the good support from the governing body, the federation of the two schools and the local authority have enabled this school to improve outcomes for most of its pupils. The outstanding behaviour of the pupils, the commitment of teachers and their support assistants has raised morale for all. As one member of staff said, the strong leadership of the headteacher and her excellent personal skills are really helping the school move forward. It is a privilege to work here. The school has achieved this through good self-evaluation and consistent monitoring of teaching and learning...which has resulted in higher attainment and better progress of pupils. The school rightly recognises there are some inconsistencies...however, the successes significantly outweigh the weaknesses and this demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement."*

**3. Benefits of Change:**

3.1 The Primary Review Policy emphasises the benefits realised from all-through primary

schools rather than separate infant and junior schools and recent data analysis continues to show that overall Key Stage 2 educational standards are higher in East Sussex for all-through primary schools than in junior schools where children transfer at the start of Year 3.

3.2 Under the Executive Headteacher, the two schools have developed common policies and approaches to teaching and learning and for tracking of pupil progress, and work well on creating a common understanding of levels of attainment and transition processes for children transferring from the infant school to the junior school. In the last two academic years, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above at KS2 has exceeded East Sussex and National averages.

3.3 The local authority and the governing body are keen to build on the excellent progress made by the Headteacher and her team, by bringing Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together as one all-through primary school.

#### **4. Procedure for Change:**

4.1 Proposed changes to the organisation of schools have to follow a prescribed process established by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006), the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

4.2 To establish one all-through primary school, the local authority proposes to close Herne Junior School on 31 August 2013 and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School from 3-7 years to 3-11 years on 1 September 2013. The all-through primary school would continue to operate across the existing Whitehill Infant and Herne Junior school sites.

4.3 **Appendix 1** to this report sets out the timeframe, key dates and statutory consultation procedures the local authority will be required to follow in order to make the proposed changes.

#### **5. Other Considerations**

5.1 Staff and trade unions will be kept informed of the statutory consultation process in accordance with the normal procedures outlined in the Managing Change policies which are available at:

<https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/schoolpersonnel/employmentpolicies/Pages/m.aspx>

#### **6. Conclusion and reason for recommendation:**

6.1 In conclusion, the local authority and the governing body believe that a change to the current organisation of Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School will build on the excellent progress made by the Headteacher and her team in the last three years and lead to a sustained improvement in educational standards at Key Stage 2.

6.2 For this reason, Lead Member is recommended to authorise the commencement of statutory consultation procedures in respect of a proposal to reorganise Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School in Crowborough.

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Local Members: Councillor Richard Stogdon & Councillor Sylvia Tidy

Background Documents: NONE

## PROPOSED STATUTORY PROCESS FOR CONSULTATION

<b>Crowborough Primary School Reorganisation Proposal to close Herne and alter the age limit at Whitehill</b>		
<b>Key Dates</b>		
Prepare Lead Member report		01 to 22 May 2012
Lead Member report goes public		12 Jun 2012
Lead Member approval to consult on a proposal to close Herne and alter the upper age limit at Whitehill		19 Jun 2012
Advise Head and Governing Body of Lead Member decision		19 Jun 2012
Preparation and printing of consultation documents		20 Jun to 31 Aug 2012
Commence consultation		7 Sep 2012
Consultation period (6 weeks) to include public meeting and other consultation events		7 Sep to 19 Oct 2012
End of consultation period		19 Oct 2012
Analysis of responses and preparation of Lead Member report		22 Oct to 26 Oct 2012
Advise Head and Governing Body of outcome of consultation period		w/c 22 Oct 2012
Lead Member report goes public		13 Nov 2012
Lead Member approval to publish statutory notices		20 Nov 2012
Advise Head and Governing Body of Lead Member decision		20 Nov 2012
Preparation of statutory notices		13 to 22 Nov 2012
Publication of statutory notices		30 Nov 2012
Representation period (6 weeks)		30 Nov 2012 to 11 Jan 2013
End of representation period		11 Jan 2013
Analysis of responses and preparation of Lead Member report		14 to 18 Jan 2013
Advise Head and Governing Body of outcome of representation period		w/c 14 Jan 2013
Lead Member report goes public		05 Feb 2013 (date tbc)
Lead Member determination of notices (final decision)		12 Feb 2013 (date tbc)
Advise Head and Governing Body of Lead Member final decision		12 Feb 2013 (date tbc)
Implementation:	Name change and signage, uniform etc	13 Feb to 31 Aug 2013
	Herne officially closes	31 Aug 2013
	Whitehill becomes an all-through primary school on two sites	01 Sep 2013

All dates subject to change and confirmation

