

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	23 March 2012
Title:	Review of Hampshire's Boarding Provision at the Westgate and Kings' Secondary Schools, Winchester
Reference:	3675
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek authority to consult on proposals to close the girls boarding provision at The Westgate Secondary School and to close the boys boarding provision at Kings' Secondary School. The timing of the proposed closures will form part of any consultation, would be no earlier than July 2013, and would not necessarily be the same for both schools.
- 1.2 The proposals have come about because of questions regarding the purpose of Hampshire's boarding provision and concerns regarding the practical viability of the boarding provision at The Westgate School in particular.
- 1.3 There is no intention to close Rotherly Nursery, an early years setting which is predominantly housed in the same building as the Westgate boarding provision.

2 Contextual information

- 2.1 Hampshire's non-statutory boarding provision was created to cater for children of service personnel. In the first instance boarding facilities were provided at grammar schools in Winchester, Peter Symonds for boys and Winchester County High School for girls. The boarding house at Montgomery of Alamein Boys School (which later amalgamated with Danemark School for Girls to become Kings' School) was established in 1966 to cater for the children of service personnel living in Hampshire who

did not access the grammar school boarding provision. Following the change to a comprehensive education system the girls grammar school became The Westgate School and continued to offer boarding provision for girls with Kings' School continuing to offer boarding provision for boys.

- 2.2 As at January 2012, of the twenty seven girls boarding at Westgate one is a member of a service family. Two girls are from families resident in Hampshire, six are from families resident in the United Kingdom and nineteen are from overseas families.
- 2.3 As at January 2012, of the twenty nine boys boarding at Kings' five are members of service families. Eleven boys are from families resident in Hampshire, seven are from families resident in the United Kingdom and eleven are from families living overseas.
- 2.4 The number of girls accessing boarding provision at The Westgate School has been a concern for several years with regard to its financial viability. Of the present twenty seven boarders seventeen will have left the school by the end of July 2013 with low numbers in the lower year groups (see table 1 below). Despite efforts to attract boarders the numbers at The Westgate School are predicted to fall to a financially unsustainable level.

2.5 The Westgate School

Boarding facilities for up to thirty four girls at The Westgate School are provided in Rotherly House, predominantly on the first floor of a two storey building. The ground floor of the boarding house accommodates Rotherly Nursery, a high quality early years setting registered for fifty five places.

An Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection report for The Westgate School's boarding provision in 2007 stated that "the boarding environment is of an unacceptable standard". As a result of some investment a subsequent Ofsted inspection of boarding provision in March 2009 found that the "overall standard of boarding accommodation is satisfactory. While some areas remain unsatisfactory, there has been a significant improvement in the overall provision", and concluded that the effectiveness of boarding provision was good. However, it is also generally accepted that it would require significant further capital investment to ensure a sustainable improvement in the physical condition of the provision.

2.6 Kings' School

Kings' Boarding House provides for up to thirty two boys. The most recent Ofsted inspection of Kings' boarding provision took place in March 2009 and found that "the overall standard of boarding accommodation is good" and that the effectiveness of boarding provision was outstanding.

2.7 Rotherly Nursery

The nursery occupies the majority of the ground floor of Rotherly House and provides a high quality setting for up to 55 children aged 2 to 5. Younger children are catered for in an adjacent building.

Rotherly Nursery was inspected by Ofsted in March 2009 when it was reported that it had maintained a high standard of care and guidance since its last inspection in 2007 and that the effectiveness of this early years foundation setting was outstanding.

2.8 Table 1 below gives the actual and forecast number of boarders (as reported by each of the schools in January 2012):

Westgate	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
2011/12	2	4	4	7	9		1	27
2012/13	1	2	4	6	7			20
2013/14		1	2	4	6			13
2014/15			1	2	4			7
2015/16				1	2			3
Kings	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
2011/12	6	5	5	6	4	2	1	29
2012/13	6	6	5	5	6	2	2	32
2013/14	6	6	6	5	5			28
2014/15	6	6	6	6	5			29
2015/16	6	6	6	6	6			30

2.9 Service family boarders, for whom the provision was originally intended, represent a very low proportion of pupils accessing the boarding provision at the two schools. This, together with concerns regarding the financial viability of the Westgate provision and the requirement for significant capital investment to improve its physical condition, led to informal discussions with The Westgate and Kings' schools to consider the future of boarding, resulting in the recommendation at section 7 to consult on proposals to close both boarding provisions. It should be stressed that the provision is not designed or used to address any form of additional educational or social need, but is purely to do with enabling physical access to the schools for families who do not live in the vicinity.

3 Timing of possible closure and security of a school place

- 3.1 As stated in 1.1 above the timing of the proposed closures of the boarding establishments will form part of any consultation, would be no earlier than July 2013 and would not necessarily be the same for both schools. The right of all boarders to complete their education at The Westgate School (girls) and at Kings' School (boys) is a given. As such all boarding pupils will be able to access their secondary education at the respective school until the end of year 11. A decision to cease to admit boarders would be taken at the same time as any decision to close the boarding establishments and in keeping with the School Admissions Code.
- 3.2 Should a decision be taken to close a boarding establishment in advance of pupils completing their statutory secondary education in accordance with their wishes, then alternative provision for pupil's boarding needs would be required. Individual assessments of pupil's needs and requirements would be undertaken in conjunction with pupils, parents and school staff in order to identify appropriate alternative provision.

4 Finance

- 4.1 The closure of boarding provision at The Westgate and Kings' Schools will have revenue and capital implications. A detailed financial appraisal will form part of the report back on the outcome of consultations.

5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A full impact assessment will be undertaken in conjunction with any authorised consultation process.

6 Process and timescales

- 6.1 If approved consultations will take place over a 12 week period and a report on the outcome of consultations prepared for submission to the Executive Lead Member's Decision Meeting in July 2012.
- 6.2 Should the decision be to proceed with the proposals then the County Council will publish statutory notices setting out its intent. Notices will be published in September and will run for a period of six weeks during which time comments/objections can be made. A final decision on whether to close the boarding provisions would then be made in December 2012.

7 Recommendations

It is recommended :

- 7.1 that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves consultations taking place with parents, pupils, governors, staff and other interested parties on proposals to close the boarding provision at The Westgate School and Kings' School, Winchester
- 7.2 that a consultation document be prepared and made available to all consultees in advance of any consultations

7.3 that a report on the outcome of the consultations be prepared for submission in July 2012.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1 There will be some impact on those boarders wishing to remain at the schools until the completion of their education at the end of Y11 and what boarding accommodation will be available to them. The school places of the boarders are, however, secure until the completion of their education should they wish to remain on the school roll.

1.2 Where boarders are from other cultural backgrounds the consultation document will be made available in the native tongue of both pupils and the parents of pupils.

1.3 There will be a loss of cultural diversity for the schools that the boarders bring from their different backgrounds.

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

The proposals have no impact on crime and disorder.

Climate Change:

How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No impact has been identified.

How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

No specific measures have been identified.