

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report :

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date of Decision:	16 October 2008
Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date of Decision:	27 October 2008
Decision Title:	Proposal for a new special provision at Crofton School
Decision Reference:	340
Report From:	John Coughlan, Director of Children's Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1) Summary of Decision Area:

- 1.1. Hampshire County Council is discussing with Crofton School a proposal to establish at the school, by September 2010 (or as soon as possible after this), provision for young people with a severe Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Crofton School is a mainstream foundation school that caters for 11 to 16 year olds. As a foundation school, Crofton would be responsible for making any statutory proposal in respect of a prescribed alteration of this type. However, in order for the school to be in a position to pursue this proposal, the County Council would need to confirm that capital funding would be available.
- 1.2. In the first instance, this report is for consideration by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services (Education). If the recommendation set out in 3.1 below is approved then the report is scheduled for consideration by Cabinet with regard to the proposal for prudential borrowing.

2) Issues Covered in Report:

- 2.1. The case for the proposal is based upon the need to build capacity in local provision and that the capital and revenue costs would be off-set by a reduction in pressure on centrally held budgets so that the project would be expected to pay for itself after approximately six years.

3) Recommendation:

- 3.1 **That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services (Education), in respect of a proposal to establish resourced**

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provision for pupils with severe ASD at Crofton School, seek the agreement of the Cabinet to in principle prudential borrowing of £500,000, chargeable to the Schools Budget, with repayments over 6 years to fund the proposed capital outlay with the balance of capital costs coming from the Schools Access Initiative.

- 3.2 That, subject to the recommendation set out in paragraph 3.1 being agreed Cabinet approve the prudential borrowing referred to in that paragraph.**

MAIN REPORT

1) Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1. Hampshire County Council is discussing with Crofton School a proposal to establish at the school, by September 2010 (or as soon as possible after this), provision for young people with a severe Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Crofton School is a mainstream foundation school that caters for 11 to 16 year olds. As a foundation school, Crofton would be responsible for making any statutory proposal in respect of a prescribed alteration of this type. So, the purpose of this report is to seek a decision leading to confirmation that capital funding would be available through the County Council.

2) Contextual Information:

- 2.1. The new provision would cater for twelve pupils aged 11-16 years but admissions would need to be phased in over four or five years.
- 2.2. All the pupils admitted would have general ability within the normal range of the Crofton School and a statement of special educational needs which identifies severe ASD as their primary special educational need; this includes Asperger's Syndrome. ASD are best described as social communication difficulties. Young people with these special educational needs do not always understand what would be regarded as everyday social conventions unless they are specifically taught. They sometimes have difficulty with speech/language, making friends, team activities, crowds, sudden noises, behaviour and almost always need to be prepared for any changes in routine that may affect them. The purpose of the ASD provision is to help pupils develop strategies to cope in the real world and this is why a mainstream experience is so important. The majority of pupils admitted are likely to be boys as the incidence of ASD is lower for girls.
- 2.3. There is resourced mainstream provision for secondary school aged pupils with ASD in the North and West of the County (at Robert May's School and Romsey School) but no similar provision in the South East. This is a proposal to establish South East provision. It is anticipated that the capital outlay could be recouped in due course through reduced pressure on non County placements and the mainstream special discretionary exceptions budget.
- 2.4. It has, for some time, been the County Council's intention to establish ASD provision in South East Hampshire. At the Education Committee meeting held on 23 May 2000, publication of notices in respect of the ASD provisions at Robert May's School and Romsey School was agreed and the Committee resolved that officers should give further consideration to the setting up of a third such provision. It is only recently that a suitable secondary school has confirmed a willingness to host this provision.

- 2.5.** This ASD provision would be a significant part of the County Council's strategy to provide a comprehensive and flexible service in South East Hampshire for youngsters with ASD covering all ages from pre-school to 19 years and beyond. At pre-school there are the Early Bird and Thomas Outreach Project services and places at Haven and Kids pre-school provisions; for primary school aged children Heathfield/Riverside special schools or mainstream school with outreach from one of the special schools or from the speech, language and communication provision at Holbrook Primary School; at secondary level there is Baycroft (special) School and the aim is that this school and Crofton would liaise closely over ASD provision as they are on the same site; specialist provision has been established at Fareham College. So, the Crofton provision would have an important part to play in the County Council's strategy; in fact the strategy is incomplete without it and this makes the County Council vulnerable at Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals and does not provide equality of opportunity across the authority.
- 2.6.** In 2007 an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism expressed concern about the extent to which policies are being implemented by Local Authorities to help ASD children and their families. The establishment of an ASD provision at Crofton School would do much to confirm our commitment to providing the help expected by the Parliamentary Group.
- 2.7.** The proposal supports the Hampshire County Council priority, "Maximising Well-Being." This is because young people with severe ASD need specialist support if they are to be able to achieve their potential at school and when they enter employment, training or further education. There is similar provision to that proposed for Crofton School at Romsey School in the West of the County and at Robert Mays School in the North. There is provision on the site of Oak Lodge School (the Oakmore Centre), a special school in the West, from which some ASD youngsters can have access to Applemore College which is a mainstream school on the same site. However, there is no mainstream secondary school ASD provision in South East Hampshire.
- 2.8.** The proposal also supports the following outcomes of Every Child Matters
- Enjoy and Achieve
 - Making a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic well-being

The proposed new facility would provide for young people with ASD to be educated in a school where there is a whole-staff awareness of their needs and where the staff are supported by appropriately qualified and experienced specialist colleagues. This would lead to the young people being better understood with consequent improvements for their progress and the qualifications they achieve. There should be a reduction in the number of appeals to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, a reduction in the need for specialist residential school placements which involve the young

people having to be educated away from home and their local community and a reduction in the number of young people with ASD in South East Hampshire who leave school but do not enter education, employment or training.

3) Key Issues:

3.1. Consultation:

3.1.1 The proposal has been shared with the Governing Body of Crofton School and, at their meeting held on 2 July 2008, the Governors voted 13 in favour of pursuing the proposal with 1 abstention; there were no governors voting against the proposal. Crofton School is a Foundation School and so it is the Governors who would be responsible for leading local and public consultation. Of course, advice and support will be available from the County Council throughout the consultation process. However, before starting the consultations, the School needs to ensure that the required capital funding would be available.

3.2 Legal Implications:

3.2.1 There is statutory guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families for "Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (Other than Expansion)." This requires that when planning alternative types of special educational needs provision the local authority should aim for a flexible range of provision and support, and ensure that local proposals:

- Take account of parental preference for particular styles of provision or education settings
- Offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of children and young people taking account of collaborative arrangements including those between mainstream and special schools
- Are consistent with the Children's and Young People's Plan
- Take full account of educational considerations, in particular ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment in which children can be healthy and stay safe
- Support the Local Authority's strategy for making schools more accessible to disabled children and young people and the scheme for promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people
- Provide access to appropriately trained staff and access to specialist support and advice

- Ensure appropriate provision for 14-19 year olds, taking account of the role of local FE colleges
- Enable children and young people to achieve the five Every Child Matters Outcomes

3.2.2 A proposal to establish resourced provision at Crofton School for pupils with severe ASD would satisfy the above-mentioned statutory guidance.

3.3 **Financial implications:**

3.3.1 The total capital outlay required once building work is ready to commence has been estimated at approximately £800,000. As this provision is not within the current capital programme, an alternative source of funding is required. The proposal would qualify under the prudential borrowing rules for capital financing. This would enable the borrowing costs to be met from the revenue stream of the Schools Budget over a period of time. It is proposed that £500,000 of the finance should come from prudential borrowing, repaid over six years with £300,000 from the budget for the School's Access Initiative and a facility to draw a further £100,000 from the latter if the cost of the proposal increases beyond the estimate.

3.3.2 If prudential borrowing is used to fund the initial capital outlay, repayments can be made over a maximum period of ten years, but must commence in the financial year following the draw down of the loan. However, the recommendation is that repayments should be over a six year period as this would reduce interest payments by approximately £60,000. Interest repayments for the loan have been estimated at 5.07% per annum, based on current borrowing terms. It is not possible to calculate exactly how much the annual repayments would be until the actual amount of loan drawn down in each financial year is known, but an estimate of £98,700 per annum for six years has been calculated based upon the assumption that the full £500,000 would be drawn down during 2009/10.

3.3.3 The additional revenue funding requirement for all twelve pupils would be approximately £176,400. However, of the twelve new placements this provision would provide when at full capacity, it is estimated that at least four of the pupils would have otherwise been placed within an out-county placement at an average cost of approximately £90,000 per annum. In addition to this it is expected that approximately £7,000 per annum would be offset for each of the other eight pupils by avoided special discretionary exceptions funding being provided to other mainstream schools.

3.3.4 A financial model to calculate the year on year revenue impact of this new provision has been developed which

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incorporates these assumptions and also allows for a phased admission process over a five year period starting in September 2010. This model suggests that additional costs would be incurred within the first four years of the programme (2009/10 to 2012/13), but that, overall the full costs of the programme could be expected to be recovered by sometime in 2016/17. This is demonstrated within the table below and is shown in more detail in the business case set out in appendix B.

Financial Year	Estimated number of pupil admissions to Crofton ASD Provision	Estimated net cost/saving (incremental) £	Estimated net cost/saving (cumulative) £
2009/10	0	0	0
2010/11	2*	164,043	164,043
2011/12	4*	103,321	367,365
2012/13	7	34,547	301,912
2013/14	10	-22,442	279,469
2014/15	12	-90,050	189,420
2015/16	12	-129,256	60,164
2016/17	12	-227,956	-167,792
2017/18	12	-227,956	-395,748
2018/19	12	-227,956	-623,704
2019/20	12	-227,956	-851,660

*The school will actually receive funding for 5 pupils in order that minimum staffing levels can be established during the transition to full capacity.

3.3.5 The minutes of the Schools Forum (15 February 2008), indicate that the Schools Forum has given its full agreement (as required by the School Funding Regulations) to the prudential borrowing costs, to finance the capital outlay on this proposal, being charged to the Schools Budget. It will be necessary to report back on some subsequent changes to the revenue cost profile if the proposal is approved.

3.3.6 The formal approval of the Cabinet to use of the prudential borrowing mechanism is now required.

3.4 Personnel implications:

3.4.1 New staff would be appointed by the school but this would be funded from the increased school budget and would be the responsibility of the Governors.

3.4.2 It would be essential for all school staff to be aware of the needs of pupils with ASD in general and the young people placed in the resourced provision in particular. The impact for the young person of having an autistic spectrum disorder can be both subtle and complex. All staff would need

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awareness level training related to the strengths and learning differences experienced by young people with ASD. In addition, key members of the teaching and support staff would need in depth training in order to plan for and meet individual needs. Working in partnership with parents and carers would also need to be taken into account and appropriate training provided.

3.4.3 Bespoke awareness training would be provided for staff and governors by the special educational needs team of inspectors/advisors in liaison with relevant colleagues from Children's Services and, where appropriate, the Health Service. Two places per year on a specialist training course would be available if needed.

3.4.4 Support would also be available from the specialist Educational Psychologist for ASD, who also facilitates liaison between the resourced provisions at Robert May's, School and the Oakmore Centre.

3.4.5 It would also be necessary to secure support from the local speech and language therapy service although the extent of this would vary according to the needs of the young people on roll of the provision at any particular time. There is currently a review of Hampshire paediatric therapy services underway and the County Council will ask the Hampshire Primary Care Trust to take account of the needs arising from this proposal if it is approved.

3.5 Impact assessment:

3.5.1 There has been no adverse equality impact identified. All the young people admitted to the proposed provision could be described as disabled under the terms of disability legislation. It should be noted that boys would benefit more than girls from this provision but this is because the incidence of ASD is greater amongst boys than it is amongst girls.

3.6 Crime prevention issues:

3.6.1 None, but making appropriate provision for children and young people with special educational needs is likely, in the longer term, to improve their life chances and to have a positive impact for them, their families and the local community.

3.7 Views of the Local County Councillor

3.7.1 The County Council's local elected representative has stated, "I am pleased to confirm that I fully support the proposal. I am very impressed with both Baycroft and Crofton Schools and am pleased to support any additional developments, such as the one proposed."

4) Outline of Options:

4.1. Option 1:

Do nothing: If no changes are made to the existing arrangements for young people with a severe ASD then, as there is currently no specialised mainstream provision within the South-East of the County, this will require young people to continue to access more expensive out-county placements and other non-specialised mainstream provision.

4.2. Option 2:

Investigate a proposal to establish by September 2010 (or as soon as possible after this), a specialised provision for young people with severe ASD through capital investment to cater for 12 pupils aged 11-16, with admissions phased over a four to five year period.

5) Option Analysis / Comparison:

- 5.1.** Whilst there is no obvious risk that provision would not be able to be obtained for these young people if the proposed new provision is not established, there is a financial risk to the authority that if demand continues to grow and Hampshire does not build capacity within it's own provision then the financial cost to the authority would increase further. This option does not enable cashable efficiencies to be achieved.
- 5.2.** If the new provision is established there is some risk that provision will not be operational in line with estimated timescales. There is a low risk of the savings targets not being achieved.

6) Conclusions:

- 6.1.** This proposal is aimed at improving the life chances and educational outcomes of a particularly vulnerable group of young people with special educational needs by improving the available provision in South East Hampshire to a level which is more in line with the rest of Hampshire.
- 6.2.** The provision would be cost effective. It would pay for itself after approximately six years and would reduce pressure on centrally held budgets within the Schools Budget.

7) Recommendation:

- 7.1. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services (Education), in respect of a proposal to establish resourced provision for pupils with severe ASD at Crofton School, seek the agreement of the Cabinet to in principle prudential borrowing of £500,000, chargeable to the Schools Budget, with repayments over 6 years to fund the proposed capital outlay with the balance of capital costs coming from the Schools Access Initiative.**

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

LINKS TO THE CORPORATE STRATEGY			Yes	No
Hampshire safer and more secure for all		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>			
Maximising well-being		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>			
Enhancing our quality of place		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>			
OR				
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:				

OTHER SIGNIFICANT LINKS:		
Links to Previous member decisions:		
Title	Ref	Date
Education Committee		23 May 2000
Direct Links to Specific Legislation or Government Directives		
Title		Date
Statutory Guidance Issued by the Department for Children Schools and Families, "Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (Other Than Expansion)"		

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>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.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

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Appendix B

Business case