

**Transport Strategy Response to Proposals to Change Age Ranges at Hawthorn
Park, Thornhill, Tithe Farm and Thomas Whitehead Lower Schools**

The proposals to extend the age ranges at the four Houghton Regis schools need to include reference to any potential traffic, travel and transport implications of increasing pupil numbers. Solutions therefore need to be developed to mitigate against issues that might arise promoting travel choice for the journey to school.

Undoubtedly the proposals will have an impact on other areas for which the council has duties and responsibilities for. This needs to be recognised as part of the process of agreeing and adopting any changes to the structure or re-organisation of these or any other schools in Central Bedfordshire.

Alterations to the school structure of pupils at these schools need to be developed against the background of the authority's obligations to promote sustainable travel - set out in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act.

Potential Impacts

The proposed changes should also be developed in the context of the Council's Local Transport Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy, in particular the explicit targets within both to achieve a reduction in car use for journeys to school.

An increase in the number of pupils, parents, teachers and other staff needing to access the school site will have a significant impact on the school site and the locality surrounding the schools specifically at the start and end of the school.. Plans therefore need to be put in place that mitigate against this impact whilst also ensuring that the school sites are accessible to all. The proposed increased in the number of pupils at each school site has the potential to see a significant increase in the number of car journeys of which the potential impacts might be:

- Reduced safety for pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of school sites
- Increased congestion at or near school sites
- Car parking issues
- Poorer local air quality and local environment
- Increased concern and dissatisfaction from residents living adjacent to schools

Whilst the proposals will mean an increased demand for travel to the school sites that are extending their age range, there will also be a reduced amount of demand for travel to the Middle Schools that these pupils would have otherwise have been transferred to. The travel and transport dynamic at these establishments may alter either positively or negatively and will also need to be monitored.

Opportunities

In order to take advantage of the opportunity the age range changes offer, a package of measures should be developed that ensures that all people who need to access the school sites are able to do so safely, keeping to a minimum any adverse issues that may occur. This approach will fit better with the adopted Local Transport Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy.

Each of the schools concerned has approved travel plans which should now be updated to reflect the changes that will be made and outline the actions they will be taking to encourage sustainable travel and to ensure any negative travel and transport issues are minimised. The sustainable transport team are able to help

Appendix E – Determination of statutory proposals to extend age ranges 16 April 2012

support this review process and provide guidance as to the actions that should be put in place. Should planning applications be needed then updated travel plans will be required to accompany the application.

School Transport Policy

As referred to earlier, Local Authorities have a duty to promote sustainable travel to schools and colleges. This is covered in Central Bedfordshire's 'Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools and Colleges Strategy (SMoTS)' which is included as part of the Local Transport Plan. Within this there are specific policies which refer to school re-organisation and development on schools sites.

CBC SMoTS Policies

| No. | Policy |
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| SMoTS 1 | All schools and colleges to have an annually updated travel plan in place |
| SMoTS 2 | All new school developments and development on a school site planning applications are accompanied by travel plans as a compulsory element and that these are enforced through the planning process |
| SMoTS 3 | All new schools to be provided with appropriate facilities to facilitate safe dropping off for bus users |
| SMoTS 4 | The implications of school closures and expansions on school travel and safety issues should be explicitly considered |
| SMoTS 5 | All new school developments to be situated on roads with 20mph speed limits along with measures to facilitate 20mph speeds. |
| SMoTS 6 | All new school developments to have 'School Keep Clear' markings with appropriate Traffic Regulation Orders |
| SMoTS 7 | All new school developments to have separate pedestrian and cycling entrances to the school site |
| SMoTS 8 | All new school developments to have cycle parking facilities for pupils, staff and visitors in-line with CBC's Cycle Parking Guidance |
| SMoTS 9 | 20 mph zones/speed limits, shared space scheme opportunities and Traffic Regulation Orders on 'School Keep Clear' markings to be positively considered for all schools involved in the Highways Capital Programme. |
| SMoTS 10 | All schools engaged in the Highways Capital Programme to be active participants in delivering promotional, publicity and educational measures. |
| SMoTS 11 | All new school developments or school structure re-organisation to include a Travel and Transport Impact Assessment as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. |
| SMoTS 12 | All schools and colleges to develop their own cycling policy. (School Cycling Policy guidance can be located in Appendix C) |
| SMoTS 13 | All schools with on-site transport and parking issues to develop and implement site management plans in consultation with relevant CBC departments |
| SMoTS 14 | CCTV to be a requirement for all ITU tendered school transport services on vehicles with 16 seats or more |
| SMoTS 15 | Seatbelts to be a requirement for all ITU tendered school transport services on all vehicles |
| SMoTS 16 | School route tenders to take in to consideration vehicle emissions with vehicles to be Euro 3 compliant as minimum standard and to provide emission and route rationalisation monitoring data. |
| SMoTS 17 | Schools and Colleges to take travel and transport implications into consideration when altering the times of the school day or when pupils mobility requirements for accessing the site alter |
| SMoTS 18 | All schools and colleges to annually nominate a person to be the contact for all issues relating to travel and transport |

**Appendix E – Determination of statutory proposals to extend age ranges 16
April 2012**

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| SMoTS 19 | All new ITU school transport contract lengths to be for either 1, 3, 5 or 8 years in length |
| SMoTS 20 | The registering of ITU provided routes to schools to be explicitly considered in the when setting the tender for a route |

The full document can be found at:

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/images/110328_Appendix%20C_SMOTS_FIN_AL%20VERSION_tcm5-38702.pdf

Whilst the proposal document fails to make clear what consideration has been given to the potential transport impacts of the proposals there remain actions that can be taken in order to facilitate safe and sustainable travel to the school sites which will mitigate any negative impacts that may stem from the changes.

I look forward to working with you and the schools concerned to develop and take advantage of the opportunities the proposed age range changes presents.

Nick Shaw
Sustainable Transport Officer,
Transport Strategy
28th February, 2012



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14 March 2012

Edwina Grant
Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford
SG17 5TQ

Dear Edwina

As the Sponsor responsible for converting King's Houghton Middle School to Academy Status from 1 September 2012 we would like to state that we are in total support of lower schools in the area that wish to change to primary school status from 1 September 2013.

We would also totally support any change to a primary/secondary system arranged around 3-11 or 4-11 primaries and 11-18 secondary schools.

Yours sincerely



**Barry Day
Chief Executive**

**Appendix E – Determination of statutory proposals to extend age ranges 16
April 2012**

**2nd April 2012 Response from Mrs Rae Bird, 85 Fensome Drive,
Houghton Regis Beds LU5 5SF**

I do not wish to object to these statutory proposals as I think that if they go ahead they will improve education generally, but would like to make the following comments:

It is not in the interest of a cohesive education system in Houghton Regis to deny Houghton Regis Lower school the same opportunity to extend their age range. Houghton Regis Lower school is a very successful and popular school and is currently oversubscribed. (This is without any of the 100 or so houses currently being built on the Bovis Quarry development within a few hundred yards of the school being occupied.)

Kings Houghton Middle school is currently in the process of becoming an academy and will then almost certainly change its age range to become a secondary school next year. I am very worried as to where this leaves Houghton Regis Lower School. Those children leaving this school in September 2013 will not have a new school in Houghton Regis to go to unless they transfer to one of the other four schools just for 2 years – this would be very detrimental to their education and is therefore totally unacceptable. I cannot see how retaining just one Lower school in the town when all others are moving to Primary is going to drive up educational standards. which surely must be the intention?

2013 is not very far away and I would like to know how the local authority intends to resolve this situation, is there a strategy and if so what is it?

Thank you, Mrs Rae Bird, 85 Fensome Drive, Houghton Regis Beds LU5 5SF

Council reply

It is acknowledged that this may lead to a disparity in provision across the current schools within the area. Nevertheless, at this stage, there are no formal proposals to amend the age range of Kings Houghton Middle School and pupils from Houghton Regis Lower School will continue to be able to transfer as they do at present. Should future proposals be received relating to Kings Houghton Middle School, this issue will need to be addressed at that stage.

Presently, only the published notices can be considered for decision and, as stated in the proposals this will not, in itself, result in the displacement of any pupils.