

DECISION RECORD ¹

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are-and-what-we-do.aspx>)

Subject: Whether or not to hold a public consultation on a proposal to close the residential provision at Falconer School, Bushey, a community special school, from September 2022	
Staff Contact: Samantha Young Tel: 01992 555754	Executive Member: Terry Douris Portfolio: Executive Member for Education, Libraries & Lifelong Learning

1. Decision

To initiate a public consultation on a proposal to close the residential provision at Falconer School, a community special school, Falconer Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 3AT from September 2022.

2. Reasons for the decision

Falconer School (the School) is a secondary school (year 7 to 11) for boys with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The school has capacity for 92 day pupils. It also offers 8 residential bed-spaces per night (Monday to Thursday).

Historically, only three of the six SEMH schools in the county provided residential places: Larwood, Hailey Hall and Falconer. The use of those places has declined over time. Since 2014 the six SEMH schools in the county have been funded to provide the services of Engagement Support Workers (ESW), in order to support pupils and their families to improve attendance and educational achievement. This approach was introduced to improve equity across all SEMH schools, to provide an alternative to the declining use of residential provision and to provide pupil and family support where a school did not have any residential provision.

The ESW approach has provided an effective, flexible and adaptive framework across the SEMH school sector. As a result of declining residential numbers and the success of the ESW approach, Larwood School closed its residential provision in 2018. The EWS approach at Falconer School has been extremely successful in providing one to one support, family and community-based support. The approach has assisted with removing barriers to learning and attendance. It allows improved community links and integrated partnership support approaches.

Falconer has had no residential boarders since December 2019, despite the school's considerable efforts to encourage pupils to use the provision.

The proposal is to close the residential provision at the school. The school will continue to use the Engagement Support Worker approach. There will be no financial implications of this proposal.

3. **Alternative options considered and rejected** ²

None

4. **Consultation**

(a) Comments of Executive Member ^{3 4}

The Executive Member has no comments other than to concur with the Director's intention to agree the proposal.

(b) Comments of other consultees ⁵

None

5. **Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed:

Title: Director of Children's Services Date: 6th September 2021

6. Copies of agreed document to:

- Democratic Services, Room 213, County Hall (signed paper original).
Electronic copy to: Democratic.Services@hertfordshire.gov.uk
(for public inspection both at County Hall and on www.hertfordshire.gov.uk)

and following the expiry of the call-in period to:

- Executive Member – Councillors Terry Douris
- Local Member; Laurence Brass
- Chair (Councillor David Andrews), and Vice-Chairs (Councillors Richard Butler and Sandy Walkington) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Office of the Schools Adjudicator (osa.team@osa.gsi.gov.uk)
- The governing body / proposers (as appropriate) – email to school head teacher to forward to the governing body
- The trustees of the school (if any)
- The local Church of England diocese - Canon David Morton, Director of Education, Diocese of St Albans (dde@stalbans.anglican.org)
- The local Roman Catholic diocese - Mr Peter Sweeney, Director of Education, Diocese of Westminster (petersweeney@rcdow.org.uk;
education@rcdow.org.uk)
- For certain types of statutory proposal only: Department for Education (DfE) (SchoolOrganisation.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gov.uk)
- For special school proposals only: The parents/carers of every registered pupil at the school
- For SEND-related proposals only: Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI); Carol Kelsey (coordinator@hertsparentcarers.org.uk;
contact@hertsparentcarers.org.uk)

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- Any other body that is deemed appropriate (e.g. other relevant diocese or diocesan board, faith organisation and any affected educational institutions in the area)

¹ for guidance see Chief Legal Officer's note "Taking Decisions"

² details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer at the time the decision was made

³ record any conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member consulted. If an Executive Member declares a conflict of interest DO NOT PROCEED without seeking advice from the Chief Legal Officer

⁴ If the matter has general significance for the Council and/or is, or is likely to be, controversial, then the officer shall consult the appropriate Executive Member before proceeding. In some cases it will be necessary to consult more than one Executive Member, and in some cases the Leader of the Council will need to be consulted

⁵ If the matter has local significance, but no general significance for the Council and no controversial aspects, the officer shall consult or inform the local member in writing (or by e mail) and proceed. It is essential that all officers responsible for delivering services ensure that local members are kept well briefed on issues affecting their areas.