

## **CABINET**

**9 NOVEMBER 2010**

### **CHANGE TO DESIGNATION OF RIVERMEAD SCHOOL, FORGE LANE, GILLINGHAM**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Wicks, Children's Services

Report from: Rose Collinson, Director of Children and Adults

Author: Juliet Sevier, Assistant Director Inclusion  
Paul Clarke, School Organisation Officer

#### **Summary**

This report outlines the outcome of the consultation on Medway Council's proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School from maintained special school with a designation as a hospital school to community special school by means of a prescribed alteration, and requests approval for officers to progress to the next stage of the process, whereby statutory notices and full proposals are published during a period of representation. Cabinet is also requested to delegate authority to the Director of Children and Adults, in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to determine whether to approve the change of designation proposals at the end of the statutory consultation period, if no objections are received.

#### **1. Budget and policy framework**

- 1.1 The proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School is consistent with the provisions of the School Organisation Aims and Principles and the Special Educational Needs Policy and Strategy, which both flow from the Children and Young People's Plan (policy framework) and is within budget. This is therefore a matter for Cabinet.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 On 29 June 2010 Cabinet considered a report outlining the proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School, and the reasons why this was being recommended. Under decision 84/2010 Cabinet authorised officers to proceed with an initial informal consultation period to allow views to be expressed on the proposal to make a prescribed alteration to Rivermead School from a Hospital School to a Community Special School.

- 2.2 The consultation period took place over a six week period between 6 September and 17 October 2010, and the results of this are set out in sections 4 and 5 of this report.
- 2.3 Rivermead is a maintained special school that has a designation as a hospital school. It is a matter for the local authority to plan and commission education provision in such a way that meets local need. Such provision can only be planned in close collaboration with health colleagues and should aim to meet the special education needs (SEN) of children who may receive education there. All hospital schools are required to have a base in the hospital to fulfil their designated role.
- 2.4 Hospital schools differ widely; some are in general or district hospitals with a rapid turnover of patients; others are located in specialist hospitals and may serve chronically ill or long stay patients.
- 2.5 Rivermead provides education in 3 distinct ways:
- for children who are in-patients at the Medway Maritime Hospital
  - for children who need home tuition, as they are too ill to attend school
  - for children attending the Rivermead school site situated in Forge Lane Gillingham.
- 2.6 Even though Rivermead supports a range of pupils, its status is as a hospital school and this is dependent upon the hospital schoolroom continuing to be available. As a 'hospital school', parents are not able to express a preference for the school at secondary transfer.

### **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1 The proposal, to re-designate Rivermead from a hospital school to a community special school, will safeguard the continued education for vulnerable children including those with statements of special educational needs. This means that Rivermead will no longer be dependent upon the Primary Care Trust (NHS Medway) providing a room, and will be able to better meet the needs of children, as most of them are not in-patients for long periods. It will also have the added benefit of parents being able to express a preference for their child to attend Rivermead where it is the most appropriate option. This will serve to increase diversity within the school.
- 3.2 The school will be able to formalise its provision for statemented children, so that it can strategically plan ahead aware of the specific needs of the pupils they will be providing for. The proposal will enable planning of curriculum delivery, retention of expertise, and development of the specified SEN provision, all of which will lead to an improvement in the outcomes for the children and young people according to their individual needs and parental preferences. This is currently not guaranteed due to the wide range of medical needs of the pupils.
- 3.3 The proposal is in line with the Medway vision as stated in 'Special Educational Needs – an inclusive policy and strategy for Medway 2009-2014', which is consistent with the every child matters framework and flows from the

Medway Children and Young Peoples Plan. The policy states the fundamental principles for SEN in Medway to be;

- A child with special educational needs should have their needs met;
- The special educational needs of most children will normally be met in a mainstream school;
- Children's needs will be met in an appropriate way;
- The views of the child should be asked and taken into account;
- Parents/carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education;
- Children with special educational needs deserve full access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum with clear post 16 progression routes and options.

3.4 Without the restrictions the current status of hospital school places upon it, the proposal would enable Rivermead School to embrace these principles, which it is expected will improve the outcomes for the young people who subsequently attend the school.

3.5 It is proposed, subject to the outcome of consultation, to implement the proposed changes on 1 September 2011.

#### **4. Results of the Consultation**

4.1 There have already been informal discussions with the Head Teacher of Rivermead on this matter, and she and the Governing Body are fully supportive of the proposal.

4.2 There is a requirement to conduct an informal consultation where the views of all interested parties can be expressed, and all views will be taken into consideration before moving to statutory representation.

4.3 The period of informal public consultation where proposals are published to interested parties ran for six weeks from 6 September 2010 to 17 October 2010. The process included;

- public consultation documents circulated to the people and organisations listed in Appendix 1
- publication of consultation document on Medway Council's website
- press notice placed in local newspaper to notify public of consultation period.

4.4 There were 63 written responses to the consultation in the form of reply slips. Of these, 61 supported the proposal and 2 were opposed.

Of the responses, the breakdown was as follows: -

Parent 24

Member of Staff 23

Governor 7 (including 2 staff/govs)

Other 9

Total 63

## 5. Public Consultation Document

- 5.1 The public consultation document (attached as Appendix 3) asked for a ticked response to one or other of the following statements:

*“ I approve of the proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School from hospital school to community special school”*

*or*

*“ I object to the proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School from hospital school to community special school”*

The response form also provided space for further comment. The comments received from the reply slips were sifted and placed into a series of categories matching the concerns of the respondents. These are shown in the table below. Some respondents offered more than one comment.

### 5.2 Summary of comments

Those in favour of proposal

33	16 staff, 12 parents, 2 staff/gov, 3 other (2xheadteachers of other schools)	No reason given
10	8 parents, 1 staff, 1 other	Parental choice
9	4 Governors, 3 staff, 2 others (1x headteacher other school)	Improve service to the benefit of vulnerable children
2	1 staff, 1 parent	Yes, but not at expense of the hospital room
1	1 governor	To remove constraints and increase flexibility, as well as saving money
1	1 parent	Good idea
1	1 staff	Improve stability and choice
1	1 parent	Agreed, but had concerns about the future numbers at the school and how that might affect her child
3	2 Governor, 1 staff	Extends the range of SEN provision in Medway

Those objecting to proposal

1	1 parent	Objected, and felt that it was important for children who are sick to have a good education (see 5.3 below).
1	1 other (general paediatrician at the hospital room)	Objected to the closure of the hospital room (see 5.4 below).

- 5.3 The parent objection received during the consultation period states “ *I object to the change because I think it is important for children who are sick to be able to learn so that (they) have a good education*”. Therefore, whilst the

sender seems to consider that the proposals will hinder the education for 'sick' children, it would seem nevertheless that the ethos behind that statement supports the very reasons for making the change. It is the schools' and officers' intention and expectation that the changes will improve the education and progression opportunities for the children who attend the school for the reasons set out above in sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

- 5.4 The objection from the paediatrician at the hospital states, "*I feel it would be a shame to lose the hospital school. It gives the child's day a structure they are familiar with...I feel it is important that their education does not suffer*". This seems to assume that the hospital room is intended to be closed as part of the proposal, which is not the case. The rationale behind the proposal is to protect the school should the **hospital** decide to remove the facility. Until that time, Rivermead will continue to service the schoolroom at the hospital.

## **6. Diversity Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 A Diversity Impact Assessment screening form has been completed and is attached as Appendix 2.

## **7. Impact of the proposal on arrangements for looked after children**

- 7.1 Looked after children receive the highest priority for admission to other schools. If necessary, the Admissions Code allows the council to place looked after children in schools that would otherwise be deemed to be full. This ensures that the council can secure appropriate provision for children that are looked after by the local authority. This strategy covers both mainstream and special schools and as such includes Rivermead.

## **8. Publication of a statutory notice**

- 8.1 If Cabinet approves the recommendation to pursue this proposal further, it would be necessary to publish a statutory notice and formal proposals of the proposed change to the designation of Rivermead by way of a prescribed alteration, to provide an opportunity for formal objection. This representation period would run for seven weeks from 10 January 2011 through to 28 February 2011. The process would follow the guidelines set out in "Making changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (A guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies)", and "The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007".
- 8.2 Cabinet will be requested to approve that should no objections be raised during the statutory period, the determination on the proposal be delegated to the Director of Children and Adults in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. However if any objections are received during that time then the decision will revert to Cabinet.

## **9. Children and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 9.1 On 20 October 2010 the proposal and responses to consultation were discussed by the Children and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The committee supported the proposal, identifying the benefits of being able to

extend the provision at Rivermead to some pupils currently being educated outside of Medway and recommended the Cabinet to approve the proposal.

## 10. Advice and analysis

- 10.1 Rivermead is currently dependent upon its base at the hospital to enable it to be designated as a school, and would be left in a vulnerable position in its existing designation should the Primary Care Trust decide to close the hospital school room. There is no additional formal designation of specific SEN provision. As a hospital school parents are not able to choose to send their children there when it may have been the first and most appropriate choice. This leads to parents expressing alternative preferences or being concerned when the LA suggests Rivermead as an appropriate provision.
- 10.2 The age range at the school following implementation of the proposal would be 11-19. It is intended that there will be no change to pupil numbers, no pupils will be displaced, no changes to staffing arrangements and any change to the standard of education would be positive as the school would have greater control over curriculum delivery, and intake of pupils. By having the age range designated as up to 19 the school will be able to continue with its established informal arrangement of offering outreach support to vulnerable post 16 students and so support their progression routes.
- 10.3 The proposal will support the councils aims of promoting diversity and choice, and of improving community cohesion, inclusion and social regeneration

## 11. Risk management

- 11.1 The following risks arise if the proposal as stated in this report are not implemented. These are principally:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
The future viability of Rivermead would be at risk	If redesignation does not take place, and the PCT subsequently decides to remove the facility of the hospital room, then Rivermead would be in a vulnerable position, further restricting its ability to provide a flexible education model.	Change the designation of Rivermead School as set out in this report.
Undermining the council's need to ensure the most effective use of resources, and raising standards across all schools	The school would not be able to plan for the needs of the pupils, and would find it difficult therefore to deliver a full curriculum, and to retain the expertise needed. The school would be reactive rather than proactive as well as having less control over certain aspects of the budget.	Redesignate Rivermead to give the school control over its future and the education it provides to vulnerable children.

- 11.2 The council has both a moral and statutory duty to promote high standards and to ensure the sustained viability of its schools.

## **12. Financial and Legal implications**

- 12.1 Funding for our schools comes from central Government via the local authority in the form of the dedicated schools grant, which is a ring-fenced sum of money for the provision of education across all of our schools. This money can only be used for schools (and certain specified services to schools), and cannot be used to fund other council services. Rivermead School will continue to be funded in the same way as is current and therefore no change will occur nor will any additional funding be necessary to implement the change.
- 12.2 The council has the power under sections 18 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make "prescribed alterations" to a maintained school. The procedure for making prescribed alterations is set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007. Before publishing a statutory notice relating to proposals to make prescribed alterations to a school, the council must undertake the consultation required by Schedule 5 of these regulations.

## **13. Recommendations**

- 13.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the responses received during the consultation period, and to agree to proceed to formal representation, when statutory notices and full proposals will be published.
- 13.2 Cabinet is also requested to delegate authority to the Director of Children and Adults, in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to determine whether to approve the change of designation proposals at the end of the statutory consultation period, if no objections are received. However if any objections are received during that time then a report will be prepared and placed before Cabinet for determination.

## **14. Suggested reasons for decision**

- 14.1 Redesignating Rivermead to a community special school will:
- a) secure the future viability of the school in the eventuality that the PCT make a decision to remove the hospital schoolroom facility.
  - b) enable the school to organise its curriculum so that it is able to plan for the particular needs of the children it provides for and to ensure that adequate expertise and resource is available.
  - c) give parents the opportunity to name Rivermead as a preference for their child's education where appropriate.
  - d) provide an opportunity for cost saving by enabling pupils to be educated within Medway rather than being placed in expensive provision out of area.

### **Lead officer contact**

Paul Clarke, School Organisation Officer  
Tel 01634 331031  
Email [paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk](mailto:paul.clarke@medway.gov.uk)

**Background papers**

Making changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (A guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies).

Special Educational Needs – An inclusive policy and strategy for Medway 2009-2014.

The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007.

**Appendices**

- 1) List of consultees
- 2) Diversity Impact Assessment screening form
- 3) Consultation document



<b>Consultation Documents for Rivermead</b>
All Councillors which include the Leader, Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Members
All Local MPs
Managing Director of Children, Families & Education Directorate at Kent County Council
Rochester Diocese
Southwark Diocese
Medway Youth Parliament
Chief Executive of Medway Council
Directors of Medway Council
Senior Management Team of Medway Council
All Governors, Staff & Parents of Rivermead School
All Chairs of Governors at Medway Schools
All Headteachers at Medway Schools
All Medway Schools- Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary & Special
Medway Early Years Provider
All Preschools, Nurseries & Playgroups
All Medway Minority Ethnic Groups
All Medway Libraries, Leisure Centres & Contact Points
Medway Council Press Office
Director of Primary Care- Medway Primary Care Trust
Chief Executive of Medway NHS Foundation Trust



## Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

<b>Directorate</b>  <b>Children and Adults Services.</b>	<b>Name of Function or Policy or Major Service Change</b>  <b>Change to designation of Rivermead School from Hospital School to a Community Special School</b>		
<b>Officer responsible for assessment</b>  Paul Clarke	<b>Date of assessment</b>  3 September 2010	<b>New or existing?</b>  New	
<b>Defining what is being assessed</b>			
<b>1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives</b>	The proposal is to redesignate Rivermead School, from a Hospital School to a Community Special School. The proposal is in line with the Medway Vision as stated in 'Special Educational Needs – An inclusive policy and strategy for Medway 2009-2014', which is consistent with the Every Child Matters framework and flows from the Medway Children and Young People's Plan.		
<b>2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?</b>	The redesignation will secure the future viability of Rivermead, and as a consequence of the resulting stability should improve the outcomes for the children and young people who attend the school.		
<b>3. What outcomes are wanted?</b>	The redesignation of Rivermead School from a maintained special school with an official designation as a Hospital School to a Community Special School from 1 September 2011. This will safeguard the future of Rivermead, in order to meet the needs of children and families. The proposal is intended to ensure the continued education for vulnerable children including those with statements of SEN.		
<b>4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</b>	<b>Contribute</b> Reassurance of staff, pupils and parents will lead to greater confidence in the schools ability to provide the appropriate level of education for all pupils who attend the school.	<b>Detract</b> Resistance from some parents unaware of how the change in designation will affect their children.	
<b>5. Who are the main stakeholders?</b>	The pupils, parents, governors and staff of Rivermead School, the local community, and the Primary Care Trust, and Medway Council.		

<b>6. Who implements this and who is responsible?</b>	Juliet Seviar- Assistant Director Inclusion

<b>Assessing impact</b>		
<b>7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial groups</i>?</b>	YES	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	<p>There is no intention to make changes to the function and provision at Rivermead, no pupils are intended to be displaced and no staff changes made as part of this proposal. As the school would be open to parental choice under the new proposal, there could be an impact in the future for racial groups. This impact however would be a positive one, as the proposal encourages diversity across all social groups, supporting the Councils aims to support inclusion and promote community cohesion. Currently only 5% of the pupils at Rivermead are classed as non-white, as opposed to 12% in Medway's other special schools, and 14% in mainstream schools. It is expected that this gap could narrow in time with the effect of parental preference. A public consultation will be carried out over a 6 week period when views can be expressed and any concerns regarding this issue may be raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<b>8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?</b>	YES	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	<p>There may over time be some changes to the provision offered by way of the changing needs of SEN children as appropriate, but the change to the designation will ensure the school has the correct resources to provide for the children with disabilities and so it would be expected that any changes will have positive impacts on the outcomes of the pupils who attend the school. A public consultation will be carried out over a 6 week period when views can be expressed and any concerns regarding this issue may be raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<b>9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?</b>		
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	<p>No pupils are intended to be displaced and no staff changes made as part of this proposal and as such it is not foreseen that there could be any differential impact due to gender. As parents</p>	

	<p>will be able to choose Rivermead as an option for their child, there will continue to be an equal opportunity for boys and girls to attend the school as there is now under the current arrangements. Currently 70% of Rivermead's pupils are male, this is however consistent with the situation in other special schools across Medway where 69% are male. A public consultation will be carried out over a 6 week period when views can be expressed and any concerns regarding this issue may be raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<b>10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?</b>		
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	<p>As no pupils are intended to be displaced and no staff changes made as part of this proposal it is not expected that there could be any differential impact due to sexual orientation. A public consultation will be carried out over a 6 week period when views can be expressed and any concerns regarding this issue may be raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<b>11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?</b>		
	YES	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	<p>Currently pupils of all religions or beliefs could attend Rivermead, and no pupils are intended to be displaced and no staff changes made as part of this proposal. The intention is to continue and improve the provision provided. As the school would be open to parental preference under the new proposal, there <u>could</u> be an impact in the future due to religion or belief. This impact however would be a positive one, as the result of the proposal encourages diversity across all social groups, supporting the Council's aims to support inclusion and promote community cohesion. A public consultation will be carried out over a 6 week period when views can be expressed and any concerns regarding this issue may be raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<b>12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>people's age</i>?</b>		
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	<p>No pupils are intended to be displaced and no staff changes made as part of this proposal, and as the age range of the pupils provided for is not expected to change it is not foreseen that there will be any differential impact due to people's age. A public consultation will be carried out over a 6 week period when views can be expressed and any concerns regarding this issue may be</p>	

	raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.	
<b>13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being transgendered or transsexual</i>?</b>		
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	No pupils are intended to be displaced and no staff changes made as part of this proposal. The school intends to continue to provide education for vulnerable children and there are no concerns that there could be a differential impact due to being transgendered or transsexual. A public consultation will be carried out over a 6 week period when views can be expressed and any concerns regarding this issue may be raised. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.	
<b>14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. young parents, commuters, people with caring responsibilities or dependants, young carers, or people living in rural areas)?</b>		
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	As there is no intention to alter the function of the school, and only a change to the official designation is being consulted on, it is unlikely that any groups will find that the changes cause them any added difficulty in accessing the school	
<b>15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability and age)?</b>		
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	All aspects of the policy described above will address the needs of children/young people who may have multiple issues affecting them.	

### Conclusions & recommendation

<b>16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to</b>		As a result of the proposal the school would benefit from having a greater ability to formalise its provision for statemented children, so that it
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there being the potential for adverse impact?	NO	will be able to plan ahead with the specific needs of the pupils they will be providing for. This will enable planning of curriculum delivery, retention of expertise, as well as the development of the specified SEN provision. This will result in the improvement in the outcomes for the pupils attending the school according to their individual needs, and therefore it is not expected that there will be any adverse impacts.
17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?	N/A	
<b>Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?</b>		
NO	<b>This service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.</b>	

<b>Action plan to make Minor modifications</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Actions (with date of completion)</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>
None	None	N/A

<b>Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review</b>		
<b>Date of next review</b>	N/A	
<b>Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)</b>	To be determined	
<b>Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?</b>	None	
<b>Signed (completing officer/service manager)</b>  Paul Clarke	<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signed (service manager/Assistant Director)</b>  Juliet Seviar	<b>Date</b>	







Photograph: Bryan Gulliver info@thearco.co.uk

# Change to designation of Rivermead School Forge Lane, Gillingham.

Public consultation document

Appendix 3

September 2010

# Change to designation of Rivermead School Forge Lane, Gillingham.

Public consultation document

September 2010

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## **This document is designed to:**

- notify you of Medway Council's proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School from hospital school to community special school;
- explain why these changes are being proposed;
- invite your comments on these proposals.

## **Why is the designation of Rivermead School being reviewed?**

Rivermead is a maintained **special school**, but historically was officially designated as a **hospital school**. The Council has a duty to plan Education provision in a way that meets local needs. All hospital schools need to have a base in the hospital to fulfil their designated role. Provision for vulnerable children can only be planned in close collaboration with health colleagues.

Rivermead currently supports a range of pupils in three distinct ways: for - children who are in-patients at the Medway Maritime Hospital; - children who need home tuition, as they are too ill to attend school; - children attending the Rivermead site in Gillingham.

To safeguard the future of Rivermead, in order to meet the needs of children and families, it is proposed to re-designate it as a Community Special School.

The proposal, to re-designate Rivermead from a hospital school to a community special school will ensure the continued education for vulnerable children including those with statements of special educational needs. This means that Rivermead will no longer be dependent on the PCT providing a room and better meet the needs of children as most of them are not in-patients for long periods. It will also have the added benefit of parents being able to express a preference for their child to attend Rivermead.

The school will be able to formalise its provision for statemented children, so that it can strategically plan ahead aware of the specific needs of the pupils they will be providing for. The proposal will enable planning of curriculum delivery, retention of expertise, and development of the specified SEN provision. All of these will lead to an improvement in the outcomes for the children and young people according to their individual needs and parental preferences. This is not currently guaranteed due to the wide range of medical needs of the pupils.

The proposal is in line with the Medway vision as stated in Special educational needs- an inclusive policy and strategy for Medway 2009-2014, which is consistent with the every child matters framework and flows from the Medway children and young peoples' plan.

The policy states the fundamental principles for SEN in Medway to be;

- a child with special educational needs should have their needs met;
- the special educational needs of most children will normally be met in a mainstream school;
- children's needs will be met in an appropriate way;
- the views of the child should be asked and taken into account;
- parents/carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education;
- children with special educational needs deserve full access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum with clear post 16 progression routes and options.

Without the restrictions the current status of hospital school places upon it, the proposal would enable Rivermead School to embrace these principles, which it is expected will improve the outcomes for the young people who subsequently attend the school.

### **When would the new designation begin?**

Medway Council is seeking to change the designation of the school from 1 September, 2011.

### **How to make comments**

We would like to hear your views on these proposals. Please let us know by:

- completing the reply slip at the end of this leaflet;
- writing a letter to:

**School Organisation and Student Services  
Medway Council,  
FREEPOST RRUY-XYXR-SGYY,  
Level 4, Gun Wharf,  
Dock Road,  
Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR.**

Alternatively hand the form or letter in at the school office at Rivermead School where your letter or form will be forwarded on your behalf.

Letters and forms must be received by **Monday 18 October 2010**.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to acknowledge receipt.

### **The next stage**

Comments on this proposal will be presented to Medway Council's Cabinet on 30 November 2010. The cabinet may decide not to proceed with the proposal or to authorise statutory notices to be published, which will give anyone the opportunity to object or comment.

If there are no objections to the notice Medway Council can decide to go ahead with the proposal. If there are one or more objections, Medway Council as schools commissioner, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, will determine the outcome.

Public consultation period	6 September – 17 October, 2010
Report outcome of consultation to cabinet	30 November, 2010
Statutory notice period	10 January - 21 February, 2011
New designation to apply from	1 September, 2011

**No decisions will be made until the consultation has been completed and local views have been carefully considered.**

# Change to designation of Rivermead School, Forge Lane, Gillingham.

## Reply form

Please complete this form and add any comments you wish below.  
Forms and letters should reach us by **Monday 18 October 2010**.

Please return to:  
**School Organisation and Student Services,  
Medway Council,  
FREEPOST RRUY-XYXR-SGYY,  
Level 4, Gun Wharf,  
Dock Road,  
Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR.**

Alternatively, hand the form or letter in at the school office at Rivermead School, Forge Lane, Gillingham where it will be forwarded on your behalf.

Please tick one box:

I approve of the proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School from hospital school to community special school.

I object to the proposal to change the designation of Rivermead School from hospital school to community special school.

Please give your reasons in as much detail as possible, below. This will help careful consideration to be given to the arguments in favour and against the proposal.

It would be helpful to have the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I am (please tick)

Parent/Guardian

Governor

Member of staff

None of the above (please specify)

## Comments

Please use this space to give your reasons and add any further comments.

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If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring this number.

**335577**

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## Change to designation of Rivermead School Forge Lane, Gillingham.

Public consultation document

September 2010