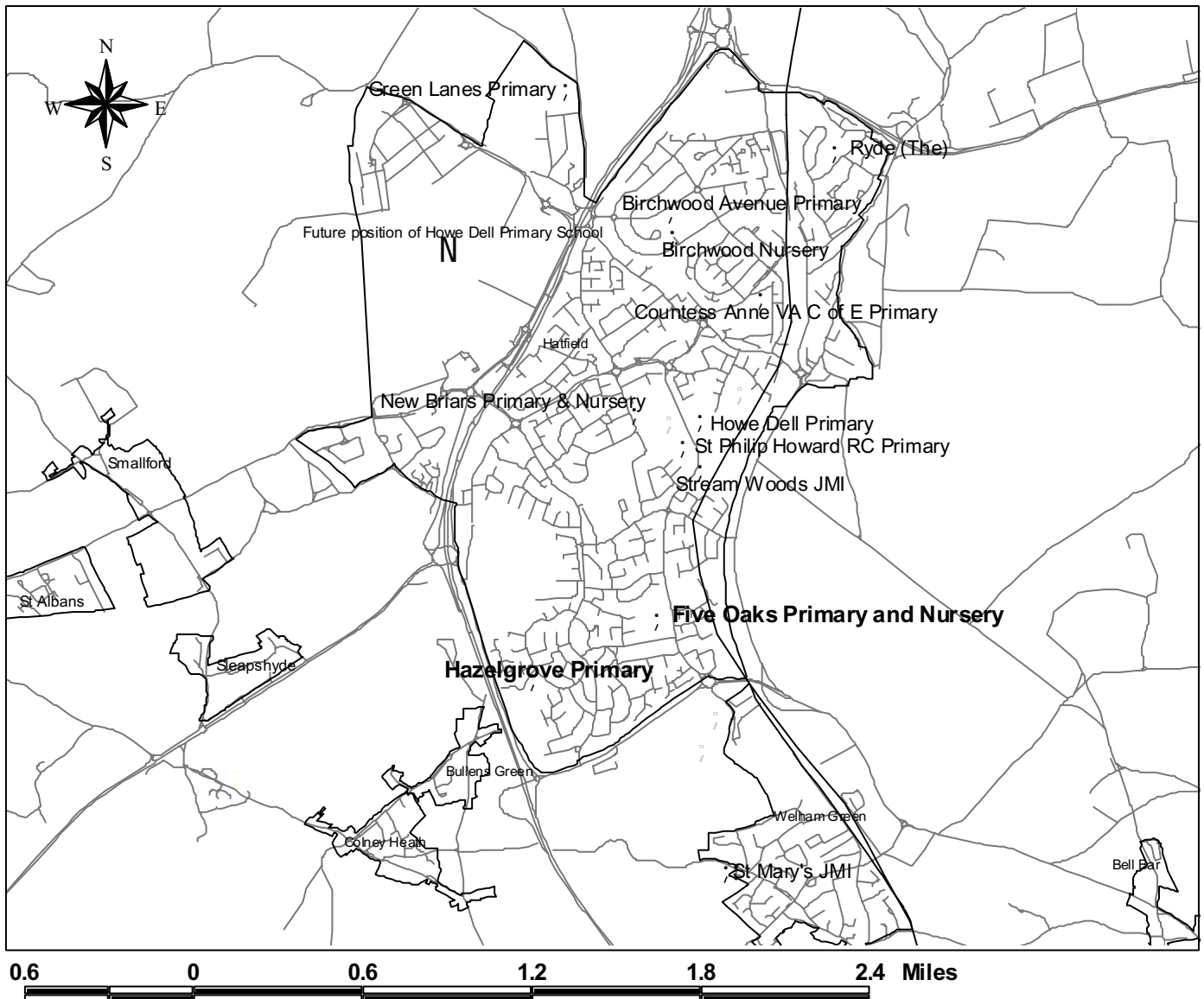


# CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

This document contains details of the proposed closure of Five Oaks Primary and Nursery School and Hazelgrove Primary School and the opening of a new Primary School on the Five Oaks site.

Issued January 2004



## How can you let us have your views?

### **You can let us know your views by:**

- <sup>3</sup> **Coming to meet us to discuss the proposal**, on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30 at Hazelgrove School, or, on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30 at Five Oaks School.

Facilities will be made available for those hard of hearing at the meetings.

At each meeting we will explain the background to the proposal and answer your questions. A County Councillor will chair the meeting and other County Councillors will be there to listen to your views. We will take notes and record the meeting as well.

- <sup>3</sup> **Completing and returning the response form** at the back of this document.
- <sup>3</sup> **Completing the on-line form** on our website at [www.hertsdirect.org/fiveoaksandhazelgrove](http://www.hertsdirect.org/fiveoaksandhazelgrove)
- <sup>3</sup> **Writing to us (freepost)**, if you do not want to use the form , to:

CSF Planning  
Freepost HJ71  
Hertfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
Hertford  
SG13 8YD

- <sup>3</sup> **E-mailing us at** [sarah.nicholls@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.nicholls@hertscc.gov.uk)

However you choose to respond please let us know if you have other suggestions or options.

**Your response needs to be with us by the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2004 please.**

This document is being widely distributed within Hatfield. If you would like more copies, please ring us on 01992 556722.

**We know this consultation will cause anxiety and uncertainty, but it is important that the County Council knows your views.**

**This is only a proposal and no decision has yet been taken. The feedback from this consultation will be carefully considered before a decision is taken.**

## Quality Primary Education

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to promoting children's achievement and helping to raise their attainment by securing the appropriate number and distribution of primary schools.

The County Council is responsible for reviewing schools, particularly where rolls are falling, to ensure that the pattern of provision results in secure schools and high quality teaching and learning.

When change is necessary the County Council generally will develop primary schools which are larger, and therefore more robust, more resilient to change and better able to develop links with their local communities. In summary, primary schools which are equipped to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century.

## The Position at Five Oaks School

Five Oaks has experienced difficulties in recent years. In 2001, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspectors commented upon "Significant Weaknesses" at the school.

The County Council has provided support to the Governors, management and staff of this school for two years. Unfortunately, despite this support, the rate of improvement has not been fast enough and the school has been judged by Ofsted, in November 2003, to require "Special Measures".

The good points identified by Ofsted were that:

- € The new Headteacher had already introduced good initiatives to raise standards and address areas of weakness.
- € Provision and teaching for children in the nursery is of a very high standard.
- € Behaviour is good and pupils work well independently.

However, Ofsted also identified a number of continuing serious issues as follows:

- € Standards are not high enough in English and mathematics by the end of year 6 and pupils in years 3-6 are underachieving.
- € The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, although it is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2, where pupils make good progress. It is poor in the reception class.
- € Aspects of leadership, management and governance are unsatisfactory in that the roles of the subject leaders are underdeveloped and the school's money has not been spent cost effectively.

While the County Council always supports schools in difficulties it also has a responsibility both to monitor and challenge school performance, and to intervene where necessary. When a school is placed in "Special Measures", the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) requires the County Council to consider the future of the school.

Currently Five Oaks, which is a 2 form entry school with capacity for 420 pupils, is operating at just over 1 form of entry with approximately 250 pupils. Based on pupil number forecasts it is expected that pupil numbers will continue to fall further undermining the educational and financial viability of Five Oaks. This means that it will be increasingly challenging for Five Oaks to deal with all of the weaknesses identified by Ofsted within an acceptable time-scale.

## Hazelgrove and the wider position in Hatfield

In common with many towns in Hertfordshire and nationally, Hatfield already has a significant number of empty primary school places. The 11 primary schools in Hatfield (see map on front cover) provide a total of 2786 places. Currently there are 635 empty places, equal to 22.8% of the total. It is expected that this low level of demand will continue. This level of empty places does not represent an efficient use of resources.

Another significant factor in Hatfield is the changing distribution of the population. Whilst in most areas of Hatfield the demand for primary school places is low the development of the north-west of the town (the former British Aerospace site) will provide a significant number of new homes for young families. In order to meet growing demand in this part of Hatfield, capacity at Green Lanes is increasing and Howe Dell is moving to a new site on the former airfield.

The need to consider the future of Five Oaks provides an opportunity to ensure that the very best arrangements are put in place for the whole of South Hatfield.

Hazelgrove is the other primary school in South Hatfield, which, in common with Five Oaks, already has low pupil numbers. It is a 1 form entry school with capacity for 210 pupils and it is currently operating at less than 1 form of entry with approximately 160 pupils. Further, based on pupil forecast figures, pupil numbers are expected to continue to fall at Hazelgrove affecting the educational and financial viability of that school. The quality of education currently provided at Hazelgrove will be at risk if numbers continue to fall.

## The Proposal

In formulating this proposal the County Council has considered other options. These were:

- € To keep Five Oaks open and to continue to support it to emerge from the "Special Measures" category.
- € To close Five Oaks and redistribute pupils to other schools.

However, it is the County Council's view that Five Oaks would not be able to make enough improvement within an acceptable time-scale and that the redistribution of pupils in this way would be extremely disruptive. Therefore neither of these options were considered to be viable and worthy of public consultation.

In September 2004 Five Oaks and Hazelgrove together will have approximately 410 pupils on their rolls, this is equal to just under 2 forms of entry. Pupil forecasts indicate that by 2009/2010 this level of demand will not increase.

The County Council's proposed approach is to close both Five Oaks and Hazelgrove and to open a new two form entry primary school with nursery class on the current Five Oaks site. This is the preferred site because the site currently occupied by Hazelgrove is not big enough to support a 2 form entry school, whereas the Five Oaks site is, and is more centrally located.

This option will;

- € Secure good education provision for existing and future pupils;
- € Build on the strengths of both Five Oaks and Hazelgrove schools
- € Produce a school which has long-term viability both educationally and financially
- € Produce a school better able to withstand any changes to the National Curriculum
- € Be more attractive to prospective parents and staff
- € Remove uncertainty for current staff and provide greater career development opportunities for them.

In the interests of pupils and staff, we believe that action needs to be taken promptly. The County Council is therefore proposing to close Five Oaks and Hazelgrove on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004 and to open a new school on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2004.

## Sites and buildings

If the proposal goes ahead the current Five Oaks buildings would be remodelled and refurbished to provide improved accommodation for the new school.

Some of the improvements may include a new nursery class, improved reception and disabled access and refurbished classrooms with improved ICT facilities.

As far as is possible the work would be programmed to minimise disruption to the ongoing operation of the school.

### What would this mean for pupils ?

The County Council is committed to getting this right for all pupils at Five Oaks and Hazelgrove and we will work closely with both schools to minimise any potential disruption to pupils' education

All children, and to the greatest extent possible, all staff will transfer to the new school which will consolidate the considerable resources of both Five Oaks and Hazelgrove in refurbished buildings.

During the transition period there will be support from the County Council, which will work closely with Headteachers at both schools to maintain standards and ensure continuity of the curriculum.

All staff will offer reassurance and support to pupils and parents throughout the transition period.

Governors will suggest a new name, school uniform and logo for the new school. Parents of existing Five Oaks and Hazelgrove pupils who transfer to the new school would be able to obtain financial assistance to purchase the particular items of school uniform that would be different. More information would be sent to parents if a decision is taken to close the schools.

Most pupils who attend Five Oaks and Hazelgrove live within a half-mile radius of the two schools. Indeed many children attending Hazelgrove live close to the Five Oaks site. It should therefore be possible for most families who currently walk to school to continue to do so.

### What would this proposal mean for staff ?

The posts of Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher would be advertised nationally, in accordance statutory requirements and the County Council's usual practice. Therefore existing Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers of both schools would be at risk of redundancy.

Subject to temporary governing body approval it is hoped that all other teaching and support staff will transfer to equivalent positions within the new school. This would depend on the staffing structure and pupil numbers, although the larger school is likely to provide opportunities for most of the staff who wish to work there.

As part of this consultation we will meet with the staff and their professional associations and trade unions.

## Governance of the new school

A temporary governing body would be formed in order to oversee the opening of the new school. This will be made up from members of the existing governing bodies at Five Oaks and Hazelgrove.

The temporary governing body would be responsible for setting the ethos of the new school, appointing the new Headteacher, suggesting a new name, logo and uniform and agreeing policies and procedures.

A permanent governing body would be elected before the opening of the new school.

## The financial implications

### **Revenue**

Under the LEA budget share arrangements for funding amalgamated schools, the new school would receive additional funding to ease the transition from two schools to one.

The new school would be funded as the equivalent of two schools (but on the basis of occupying only one site) for the first two years from the date of the amalgamation. In the third year, it would receive amalgamation funding of 50% of the difference between the funding of one and two schools. In the fourth and subsequent years after the date of amalgamation there would be no additional funding and the school would be funded as one school.

The balances, both surpluses and deficits, of the existing schools would transfer to the new primary school.

### **Capital**

Building work would be funded from the eventual disposal of the Hazelgrove site.

## What happens next ?

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Publication of proposals	16 <sup>th</sup> January – 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2004
Public Meetings	€ 7.30pm on 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2004 at Hazelgrove € 7.30pm on 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2004 at Five Oaks
CSF Resources Panel to consider the outcome of the public consultation	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2004
County Council Cabinet to consider the outcome of the public consultation and to decide on whether to proceed to Statutory Notices	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2004
Publication of Statutory Notices	19 <sup>th</sup> March – 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2004
School Organisation Committee to consider any formal objections received during the statutory notice period and to take a decision on the proposal.	Mid May 2004
Building refurbishment	Mid May - End August 2004
New school opens	September 2004



Children, Schools and Families

## Public Consultation

# The Proposed Closure of Five Oaks Primary School and Hazelgrove Primary School and the opening of a new Primary School on the current Five Oaks site

### RESPONSE FORM

If you have comments about the proposals to close Five Oaks Primary School and Hazelgrove Primary School, please complete this response form and return it (**freepost**)  
By 20<sup>th</sup> February 2004 to:

**Sarah Nicholls, CSF Planning, Freepost HJ71  
Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8YD**

**1. Name and Address** (This information will be treated **confidentially**)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

**2. About You** (Please tick the most relevant box only in A and B below)

Section A	
I am a :	
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B	
I am mainly connected with :	
Five Oaks Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazelgrove Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state below)	<input type="checkbox"/>



