

Title: Stour Valley Community School

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Annex B

S9 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Catchment Area

1. SVCS's admissions policy is fully compliant with the admissions code. If the school is over-subscribed, priority (after first accepting children with statements of SEN on which FSN has been named) will be given in the following order:
 - A. Looked after children;
 - B. Children who have an older sibling attending SVCS at the time of transfer;
 - C. Proximity to the School using straight line measurement from the main entrance of SVCS to the main entrance to the child's home.
2. Based on the acceptances of offers made so far, SVCS has a wide catchment area. This is in line with officials and proposers' original expectations given the school is located in a rural area. Expressions of interest were received from children as far south as Hedingham, Essex; as far east as Sudbury; as far north as Lidgate; and as far west as Haverhill.
3. Taking into account the projections for an increase in demand for school places over the next 10 years, together with the expectation that SVCS will draw its pupils from a wide catchment area, it is reasonable to conclude that the long-term impact of the increased provision will not be significant at individual school level because the impact will be dispersed across a relatively wide area. The analysis on each school below supports this approach.
4. The permanent site for the proposed SVCS site is the existing Clare Middle School, Cavendish Road, Clare, Suffolk. SVCS have completed their allocation of offers to pupils and officials have noted that of the 133 pupils who have so far accepted offers the furthest lives over 10 miles away from the site by straight line distance.
5. On this basis, we have gathered information about the 6 maintained secondary/upper schools situated within 10 miles of Stour Valley Community School, as displayed in Table 1.
6. The key characteristics of SVCS's catchment area for September 2011 are that parents are willing to travel from far away to attend the school, the majority of pupils live within 4 miles and pupils will be drawn from all over south Suffolk. However, the biggest single source of pupils is the Glemsford, Cavendish and Hartest primary schools catchment area which contributes over 35% of accepted places and would normally feed into the upper schools in Sudbury. However, there are noticeably fewer children from Essex (south of the school) and this can be put down to the lack of historical cross-border

transfers because of the different tiers of provision. Should SVCS be established and successful we would expect to see the number of applicants from Essex increase.

7. It is likely, therefore, that should SVCS become a successful school applications for future years will be driven by proximity to the school with the impact being dispersed between the schools in Haverhill, Sudbury and Essex. The nearest secondary school to the north is over 15 miles away in Bury St Edmunds and given the high academic standards reached, we do not expect this school to be adversely affected.

Nearby Schools

8. Table 1 shows that, of the 6 schools within a 10 mile radius, only 1 has more pupils on roll than their planned pupil number provides for and that 2 of the schools were rated good and 2 rated outstanding by Ofsted at their last inspection. Given SVCS does not have an established track record, its smaller capacity and wide catchment area, it is unlikely to have a very adverse impact on high performing, oversubscribed schools, either initially or over time.

9. The knock-on impact of SVCS is more likely to be significant for local schools which are underperforming and are operating with surplus capacity. Schools like these are normally more vulnerable to losing children when additional school places become available elsewhere. The table also shows that within a 10 mile radius, none of the schools are rated by Ofsted to be unsatisfactory. Officials have analysed the potential impact of SVCS on these schools in more detail below.

SCHOOLS AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL

Sudbury – Suffolk

10. Sudbury Upper School and Arts College – 6.6 miles east of Clare. Currently 943 pupils aged 13-18 and 9% surplus capacity – due to expand to 1,400 11-18 places under the reorganisation proposals from September 2013 – with some additional year group entry proposed to support transition from the closure of Clare Middle school. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 34%/46%/34%. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are slightly higher than the national average and broadly the same percentage of pupils with statements as nationally. The school was recently inspected by Ofsted in October 2010 and received grade 3 – satisfactory.

11. Officials feel that Sudbury Upper School is the school most likely to be affected by the creation of SVCS. It is the second closest school in terms of proximity, but has high surplus capacity and performs less well than the other upper school in Sudbury, Great Cornard (see below). In addition, the highest percentage of pupils starting at SVCS in 2011 will come from this catchment area. However, given what we know of SVCS's size and wide catchment

area, officials consider it unlikely that the impact of SVCS will be significant enough to threaten the future viability of Sudbury Upper School.

12. Great Cornard Upper School and Technology College – 7.8 miles east of Clare. Currently 800 pupils aged 13-18 and 17% surplus capacity – due to expand to 1,400 places under the reorganisation proposals from September 2013. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 50%/58%/44%. The school serves an area of relatively low deprivation and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and disabilities is below average. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2009 and received grade 2 – good.

13. There is an existing perception amongst parents in the Sudbury catchment area that Great Cornard is the better of the two schools in Sudbury and therefore we would expect that while some pupils will be lost to SVCS the number will not be so great as for Sudbury Upper and therefore we do not expect there to be an adverse impact on Great Cornard by the establishment of SVCS. This is a view shared by the local authority.

Haverhill – Suffolk

14. Samuel Ward Arts and Technology College – 6.1 miles east of Clare. Currently 816 pupils aged 13-18 and currently oversubscribed – due to expand to 1,400 11-18 places from September 2011. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 57%/45%/47%. The College has a mixed catchment area, including some areas of significant deprivation and the proportion pupils eligible for free school meals is low and the percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need is close to the national average. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2008 and received grade 1 – outstanding. Samuel Ward has successfully applied to convert to an Academy and its head teacher is a National Leader of Education.

15. Although Samuel Ward is the closest school to SVCS it is again oversubscribed for its 2011 intake. This reflects its 'outstanding' rating from Ofsted and the fact that it has the highest academic attainment rates in south Suffolk. Officials consider it very unlikely, given what we know of its size and catchment area that SVCS will have an adverse, or indeed any significant, impact on a high performing, popular school such as Samuel Ward.

16. Castle Manor Business and Enterprise College 6.9 miles west of Clare. Currently 556 pupils aged 13-18 and currently 26% surplus capacity - due to expand to 1,400 11-18 places from September 2011. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 32%/36%/35%. The proportion of children at Castle Manor School eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average and the proportion with statements of special educational need is below average. The school was recently inspected by Ofsted in October 2010 and received a grade 1 –

Outstanding.

17. Castle Manor, although recently judged to be 'outstanding' is still perceived to be the weaker of the two schools in Haverhill and currently picks up students that are not successful in their application to Samuel Ward. Therefore we might expect that pupils that do not gain a place at Samuel Ward may instead choose to attend SVCS. However, given the school's recent inspection will most likely boost it's standing locally we do not expect Castle Manor to lose enough pupils for it to potentially become unviable.

Halsted – Essex

18. Hedingham School and Sixth Form is 6.6 miles south of Clare. It caters for 1135 pupils aged 11-18 and currently oversubscribed. Performance data for the last 3 years shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 42%/56%/45%. The school serves a large rural catchment area in north Essex. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low, and the number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below that found in schools nationally. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2007 and received a grade 2 – good.

19. Although, Hedingham School is the joint-second closest school to SVCS the number of children starting in September 2011 from this catchment area is very low. This is expected because of the different ages of transfer that have previously existed between Suffolk and Essex. However, should SVCS become successful we could expect the number of pupils applying from this area to increase. However, given the large size of the school and the good level of results achieved officials consider it very unlikely that the impact of SVCS will be significant enough to threaten the future viability of Hedingham School.

20. The Ramsey College is 9.5 miles south of Clare. It caters for 649 pupils aged 11-16 and currently has 24% surplus capacity. Performance data for the last 3 years shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 39%/31%/34%. The College serves a mainly rural area with lower-than-average deprivation and eligibility for free school meals. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little smaller than that expected nationally. The College was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2009 and received a grade 3 – satisfactory.

21. Very few children attending this school reside within the Clare catchment area, although it is possible that some pupils that do not gain a place at Hedingham School could choose SVCS over Ramsey College. However, particularly in the short-term we do not expect this to be a high number of pupils. Officials therefore believe it is very unlikely that the future viability of Ramsey College will be affected by SVCS.

Bury St Edmunds – Suffolk

22. Bury St Edmunds County Upper School is 17 miles north of Clare. It caters for 941 pupils aged 13-18 and currently has 6.5% surplus capacity. Performance data for the last 3 years shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 61%/55%/62%. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is above what is found nationally, although a smaller than average proportion has a statement of special educational need. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The School was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2008 and received a grade 1 – outstanding.

23. King Edward VI CofE Upper School is 18 miles north of Clare. It caters for 1383 pupils aged 13-18 and currently has 3% surplus capacity. Performance data for the last 3 years shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 56%/58%/60%. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average. The School was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2009 and received a grade 2 – good.

24. St Benedict's Catholic School is 18 miles north of Clare. It caters for 582 pupils aged 13-18 and currently has 5% surplus capacity. Performance data for the last 3 years shows 5+ A*-C including English and maths: 66%/68%/69%. Standards on entry are high and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals or identified as having learning difficulties is low. The School was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2008 and received a grade 1 – outstanding.

25. Although the closest secondary school to SVCS is Bury St Edmunds is 17 miles away a small proportion of the existing Clare Middle School catchment area pupils attend primary schools in Bury St Edmunds. It is therefore possible that some pupils may be drawn away from the secondary schools above. However, the nearest Church of England and Catholic Upper schools are in Bury St Edmunds and officials consider it likely that those parents that want a faith-based education for their children will continue to send their children to there. Furthermore, when the high academic standards achieved by the schools in Bury St Edmunds is combined with the relatively small capacity of SVCS it officials conclude that it is very unlikely that the establishment of SVCS will have a significant negative impact on these schools.

Suffolk LA

26. Officials wrote to SCC to request their views on the proposal to establish a Free School in Clare and invited representations from affected schools and FE institutions. In its response SCC commented that SVCS could be a popular and successful school by providing a distinctive alternative to other local provision, based on its smaller size and community roots. However, they did raise the issue of the impact on the LA's reorganisation. They would expect that half of the students would come from Haverhill and half from Sudbury catchment areas, and the loss of 200 to 300 students from either catchment area would naturally have an impact on the system change

that is currently being implemented. However, their concerns were not so great that they felt the reorganisation as a whole would be undermined – as an 11-16 school SVCS would fit in to the new two-tier provision model – and it is a decision for SCC as to whether they want to continue the expansion work of the upper schools in Sudbury. As SVCS will be cited in the catchment area that the expansion plans were anticipated to accommodate, if SCC do decide to halt their expansion plans in Sudbury we do not believe this will adversely affect children with protected characteristics because the same opportunities will be available to them at SVCS as at either Sudbury school.

Representations

27. We have received objections to the proposal from 4 secondary/upper schools (Sudbury Upper School, Samuel Ward College; Castle Manor College (all Suffolk) and Hedingham School (Essex)); in addition to representations from some of the local primary schools. The objections cite the following:

- a. there is already a good deal of choice for parents in the area
- b. an additional school would be an inefficient use of resources and threaten the viability of the other schools
- c. the proposed educational offer at Stour Valley Community School is narrow and focused on the upper part of the ability range and so would not be suitable for all local children
- d. the proposal for a secondary school at Clare was consulted upon as part of the Suffolk County Council's school reorganisation scheme and the decision was made against such a proposal.

28. Taking these objections in turn:

- a. Our assessment of the SVET business case showed that there is some parental dissatisfaction with the range of choice available to them; in particular they view the schools in Haverhill and Sudbury as being large scale and variable in performance. A smaller school at the heart of its community, distinct from those schools closest to it, would fit with the approach that Free Schools should innovate and challenge the usual preconceptions
- b. While SVCS would create further surplus places within Suffolk we do not believe this would be an inefficient use of resources if it were to act as a driver to raise standards. SCC retains the option of not expanding the upper schools in Sudbury should it feel the reduction in anticipated pupil numbers means this scheme will not offer value for money. SCC has made clear to officials that it wants to continue to drive up standards in Suffolk and that Free Schools could be one way of achieving this. SCC also made clear in a letter to officials that while SVCS will impact

on schools in both Sudbury and Haverhill it will not do so to the extent that any will become unviable.

- c. SVET made the case in its BCP for a smaller school, with an intimate ethos with a focus on depth not breadth. This improves the choice available to parents, some of whom may prefer the broader range options available at the nearby schools. We have no reason to believe that SVCS will focus on the upper ability range; children will be admitted to the school without reference to academic ability and the school has committed to working with children in need of extra support. This is a school suitable for all children in the area.
- d. As part of the reorganisation process SCC consulted upon the possibility of citing a secondary school in Clare. This was decided against because the Council concluded that the previous government's desire to establish "17 lines of learning" and the diploma programme would be difficult to provide at Clare given the smaller size of the school. This factor is no longer relevant because that policy has not been continued by the Government. However, SVET demonstrated in their business case their desire to form links with other schools and businesses to broaden it educational offer.

37. Overall, officials believe the nature of the proposed offer reflects the distinctiveness of the proposal compared to existing provision and the desire to reflect the likely intake of the school and the community's aspirations. The rural, intimate ethos of SVCS is one of its key selling points and distinguishes it from the larger schools in more urban areas. Parents that do not want this type of education for their children would retain the option to send their children to the larger schools in Sudbury or Haverhill.

38. To conclude, officials consider the likely impact of establishing the Stour Valley Community School on maintained schools, Academies and FE institutions in the area the school is proposed in to be marginal. Pupils would be likely to be drawn away from local schools, but all should remain viable, and any negative impact on particular institutions is outweighed by the positive impact that SVCS will have on parental choice and driving up standards in local schools.

Table 1. Maintained Secondary Schools within a 10-mile radius of the site of Stour Valley Community School

School Name	Capacity	No. of Pupils	Distance (km)	Ofsted Rating
Samuel Ward Academy	799	784	6.1	1
Hedingham School	1168	1175	6.6	2
Sudbury Upper School	1099	718	6.6	3
Castle Manor College	788	576	6.9	1
Great Cornard Upper School	982	597	7.8	2
The Ramsey College	847	613	9.5	3

