

# Solihull Observer



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## School set to move as part of 'bold vision'

by **Chris Willmott**  
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AN AMBITIOUS 'vision' to relocate Knowle's Arden Academy has been created - The Observer can exclusively reveal.

The proposed Arden Centre for Community Learning - ACCL - would incorporate a '0 to 19 all-through' school with a 600-seat performing arts theatre, swimming pool, sports centre, a 4G floodlit pitch, community library, day nursery and youth centre - all on land between the Arden Medical Centre on Station Road, the former Middlefield site and the school's existing playing fields.

The move - funded by a 'land swap' and inspired by the Solihull Local Plan Review to find suitable housing sites across the borough - would see the current school demolished and the land being made available for housing development - subject to approval.

The new school site is set to be in close proximity to other potential future housing developments, some of which are currently in private ownership and designated green belt, but which could be developed to fulfil future housing needs.

Access to the new academy would be from the Warwick Road down Stripes Hill and from the Grove Road end of the site.

Readers can see a map showing the various areas of the site by visiting [solihullobserver.com](http://solihullobserver.com).

In a letter to 'neighbours' Principal



Arden Academy Principal Martin Murphy encouraged all concerned to work together.

Martin Murphy said: "I feel it is very important to share our vision with you as we will need to work very closely together if we are going to create the best for our local community.

"You may see this vision as either a threat or an opportunity.

"We do, however, over the next six months need to get an understanding on where we all stand.

"If we can work closely together I am sure we can create a much-needed facility."

He added that the community benefits for sport, health, leisure and all-age

learning were 'very evident indeed' and that the associated benefits resulting from much less traffic on Station Road and safer routes to school for children would also have major impact for many neighbours.

"We are obviously at the very early stages of realising the vision of 'The Arden Triangle' and there are many feasibility surveys and consultation events taking place over the coming months," he said.

### Proposals

An information day is being held at the school to give villagers and neighbours the chance to speak to Mr Murphy about the proposals.

The event will take place on Friday, March 18 between 10.30am and 6pm in the Conference Room at Arden.

Mr Murphy added: "Our community deserves the very best and has suffered somewhat over recent years in not having modern purpose-built facilities of high quality with the majority of investment being in North Solihull.

"We believe that by developing a 'land swap' agreement our community could get a fantastic facility largely funded by house building."

A spokesperson for Solihull Council said Arden's aspiration for a brand new school building was forming part of the Knowle, Dorrige and Bentley Heath neighbourhood plan discussions with local stakeholders, which include the Council, but which are at a very early stage."