

From: Alex King – Deputy Leader
Peter Sass – Head of Democratic Services

To: County Council – 29 March 2012

Subject: Petition Scheme Debates

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Details of Petitions received, which will be the subject of debates in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

For Decision

Introduction

1. (1) In accordance with the Petition Scheme agreed at the County Council meeting on 22 July 2010, any petition on a County Council matter relating to a specific District Council area that has more than 1,000 signatures will trigger a debate at County Council.

(2) The process for the each debate is that the Lead Petitioner(s) will be invited to speak to the petition for up to 5 minutes in total. There will then be a debate of up to 35 Minutes (with each Member speaking for 3 minutes) before the Cabinet Member is invited to respond for a maximum of 5 minutes. As the subject matters for these petitions relate to matters that are the responsibility of the Council's Executive, the County Council may decide whether to make a recommendation to the relevant Cabinet Members to inform the decision-making process.

Petition 1 – Requesting the County Council to establish a grammar school in Sevenoaks

2. (1) The above E-Petition has been available on KCC's website for signature for 3 months. The petition attracted 2620 signatures and therefore has triggered a County Council Debate. A statement from the Lead Petitioners, Mr & Mrs Shilling is attached (**Appendix 1**). Mr and Mrs Shilling will be attending the meeting and Mr Shilling will be speaking to the petition.

(2) A briefing report from the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills in relation to the petition is attached. (**Appendix 2**)

Petition 2 - Requesting the County Council to save Ramsgate Youth Clubs

3. (1) A paper Petition was submitted to the Head of Democratic Services on 13 March 2012 requesting the retention of the Concorde and Artwise Youth Centres in Ramsgate and the rejection of the proposal for the Quarterdeck in Margate to be the only Youth Centre Hub in Thanet. The petition contains 1417 signatures and therefore has triggered a County Council Debate. An earlier e-petition attracted 68

signatures. A statement from the Lead Petitioners is attached (**Appendix 3**). Mr Redmond (Thanet Wanderers Rugby Club) and Thanet District Councillor Will Scobie will be attending the meeting and speaking to the petition.

(2) A briefing report from the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities in relation to the petition is attached. (**Appendix 4**)

Petition 3 – opposing the closure of Richborough Household Waste Recycling Centre

4. (1) A paper Petition was submitted to the Head of Democratic Services on 16 March 2012 requesting the County Council to decide to keep the household and recycling facility at Richborough near Sandwich. The petition contains 1302 signatures (there is also a similar e-petition which has attracted 554 signatures (as at 19 March). A statement from the Lead Petitioners will follow and it is expected that the Lead Petitioners will wish to attend the meeting and speak to the petition, but at the time of writing, this had not been confirmed.

(2) A briefing report from the Cabinet Member for Environment Highways and Waste in relation to the petition will follow.

RECOMMENDATION

5. (1) The County Council is invited to respond to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills in relation to Petition 1.

(2) The County Council is invited to respond to the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities in respect of Petition 2.

(3) The County Council is invited to respond to the Cabinet Member for Environment Highways and Waste in respect of Petition 3.

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
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Background Documents: None



PETITION FOR A SEVENOAKS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

We, the undersigned (over 2,600 people), petition the Council to establish a grammar school in Sevenoaks.

Sevenoaks does not have a grammar school at present. Instead, every day, 1,150 Sevenoaks children travel to grammar schools in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, a round trip of up to 25 miles. Many of these children spend up to two hours commuting each day from a young age. This has a negative effect on their learning, on their opportunities for hobbies and sport, on their opportunities to develop friendships, and on the time they spend with their families.

The law was recently changed to enable grammar schools to expand and to establish new sites in nearby towns. We, the undersigned, therefore urge the Council to take advantage of the new law by establishing a grammar school in Sevenoaks, to provide a local grammar education for local boys and girls.

Population Growth

The school age population in Sevenoaks is growing rapidly: at Sevenoaks state primary schools there are currently 530 children in year 6 (11 year olds), and 724 children in reception year (5 year olds) – a 37% increase. The same situation is occurring across West Kent

The Council's population projections (published in October) predict that by 2018 there will be 1,100 more children aged 10 and 11 in West Kent (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells districts). This means that 550 extra secondary school places will be needed at West Kent schools per academic year by 2018.

Approximately 35% of West Kent children pass the 11+ test. Consequently, by 2018, around 200 extra grammar school places per academic year will be needed in West Kent. This is too large an increase for the existing West Kent grammar schools to accommodate via expansion at their existing sites.

Furthermore, this year's allocation of secondary school places announced on 1st March, where around 100 West Kent children (mostly from Sevenoaks) passed the 11+ but were not offered West Kent grammar school places, provided a frightening glimpse of the near future when all Sevenoaks children will be outside the catchment areas of the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells grammar schools, meaning that super-

selective grammar schools will be their only option. Our children will then be directly competing for grammar school places with children from London, Surrey and Sussex – with the very highest scorers gaining the coveted places, and everyone else losing out.

Our 2,600 supporters believe that the solution is for the Council to establish a Sevenoaks grammar school that operates a catchment area-based admissions policy, and not super-selection. The (shortly to be vacant) Wildernesse site in Sevenoaks appears to be the only suitable location large enough to accommodate the required extra grammar school places.

A Sevenoaks grammar school would ensure that all Sevenoaks and West Kent children who pass the 11+ test would receive the grammar school places they deserve, and not just the very highest scorers from across South-East England. We therefore petition the Council to support this proposal.

www.sevenoaksgrammar.com

APPENDIX 2

By Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills
Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills

To County Council

Date 9 March 2012

Subject Grammar School Provision in Sevenoaks

Classification Unrestricted

Summary	Following an ePetition from residents in Sevenoaks, KCC is considering whether Grammar School provision could be provided for the young people resident in the Sevenoaks District.
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1. Introduction

(1) The purpose of this paper is to inform Council Members of the future need for additional secondary places in the Sevenoaks district in the context of the ePetition.

2. Background

(1) Within the Sevenoaks district, in respect of school planning provision, the district can be divided into two parts (See Annex A).

(2) The Sevenoaks north area is in a Comprehensive Scheme of education. There are two secondary schools, with no selective provision. There are 2488 students in years 7 to 11 resident in Sevenoaks north.

(3) The Sevenoaks south area is in a Grammar scheme of education. There is one secondary school, with no selective provision. There are 2533 students in years 7 to 11 resident in Sevenoaks south.

(4) A Kent County Council online ePetition requesting the council to establish a grammar school in Sevenoaks, has acquired 2620 signatures. This petition has the backing of the local MP.

(5) Parents can make representations about the supply of school places and local authorities have a statutory duty to respond to these representations. Further statutory guidance on this duty is available in "Duty to Respond to Parental Representations about the Provision of Schools". It is for local authorities, in partnership with other stakeholders, to plan for the provision of places.

(6) Local authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. They must also ensure that there are sufficient schools in their area, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

3. Analysis of Secondary Provision in Sevenoaks

(January 2011 School Census)

Sevenoaks North

(1) There are two secondary schools in Sevenoaks north. The Orchards Academy is a 4 FE non-selective government sponsored Academy, offering 120 mixed Year 7 places every year. Hextable School is a 5FE non-selective community comprehensive school offering 150 mixed Year 7 places every year.

(2) The total number of Year 7 – 11 students resident in Sevenoaks north was 2488 in January 2011.

(a) 771 students remained in the Sevenoaks north area and were educated at:

- (i) Orchard Academy (412 students)
- (ii) Hextable School (359 students)

(b) 282 students travelled to Sevenoaks south, to attend the Knole Academy.

(c) 986 students travelled to Dartford district

- (i) 575 students attended selective provision
- (ii) 411 students attended non selective provision.

(d) 449 students attended a selective or non-selective provision outside of Sevenoaks or Dartford.

(3) The number of Year 7 students resident in Sevenoaks north was 491. Of these:

(a) 125 students remained in the Sevenoaks north area and were educated at:

- (i) Orchard Academy (62 students)
- (ii) Hextable School (63 students)

(b) 64 students travelled to Sevenoaks south, to attend the Knole Academy.

(c) 204 travelled to the Dartford district

- (i) 108 students attended selective provision
- (ii) 96 students attended non selective provision.

(d) 98 travelled outside Sevenoaks and Dartford districts to attend secondary provision elsewhere.

Sevenoaks South

(4) There is one secondary school in Sevenoaks south. The Knole Academy is a 8FE non-selective school, offering 240 mixed Year 7 places every year.

(5) The total number of Year 7 – 11 students resident in Sevenoaks south was 2533 in January 2011.

(a) 601 students remained in the Sevenoaks south area and were educated at the Knole Academy.

(b) 9 students travelled to Sevenoaks north to attend either the Orchard Academy or Hextable School.

(c) 1887 students travelled to the Tonbridge & Malling or Tunbridge Wells districts. Of these:

- (i) 1151 students attended selective provision
- (ii) 736 students attended non selective provision .

(d) 36 students travelled outside a secondary provision outside of Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells or Tonbridge and Malling.

(6) The number of Year 7 students resident in Sevenoaks south was 557. Of these:

(a) 126 students remained in the Sevenoaks south area and were educated at the Knole Academy.

(b) 1 student travelled to Sevenoaks north to attend Hextable School.

(c) 424 students travelled to the Tonbridge & Malling or Tunbridge Wells districts. Of these:

- (i) 180 students attended selective provision
- (ii) 244 students attended non selective provision

(d) 6 students travelled outside a secondary provision outside of Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells or Tonbridge and Malling

(7) For the purposes of this paper, the ePetition relates to provision in Sevenoaks south.

4. Analysis of Forecasts for Secondary Provision

(1) Forecasts indicate that by September 2016, year 7 numbers will have increased by an additional 6 FE in Sevenoaks south, Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells.

5. National Policy

(1) Ministers have resisted pressure to extend selection in the state system. The Government declined to support a Conservative backbencher's amendment to the 2011 Education Bill, calling for Independent schools to be allowed to select pupils on ability, even if they convert to become Academies.

(2) However, in response to a question (Q96) about Grammar schools seeking to expand, the Secretary of State at the Education Select Committee on the 31st

January 2012, referred to the West Kent case. He said that “Kent is experiencing a significant increase in population overall and that it has been accepted by the last Government, as it has been by this one, that if you have population growth in an area where there is selective provision, you should allow schools in that area to expand to take account of it.” He went on to say that “in a selective area, if provision needs to grow in order to take account of population growth, that is absolutely fine, but it is not our intention to extend selection beyond those areas where it currently exists.”

(3) The new School Admissions Code gives greater freedom for good schools – including Grammar schools – to expand. However, the law introduced, in 1997 remains unchanged and no new grammar schools can open (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 104). A recent statement by the Minister for Schools made clear that no school will be allowed to expand by more than 25% without the approval of the Secretary of State for Education.

6. The Legal Framework

(1) Under current Government legislation, it is not possible to establish a new school which has selective admission criteria (Education and Inspections Act 2006). This applies to any type of new state funded school, including Free Schools and Academies.

(2) Statutory guidance provides for expansion of any maintained school, including Grammar schools. The 'School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009' applies to Grammar Schools as well, but there is no presumption of approval from the local authority.

(3) The process for enlargement could also apply to an off site enlargement or satellite provision. The Statutory process for proposing a prescribed change must be followed.

(4) DfE advice suggests the conditions for expansion would be the same catchment area or reasonable distance from the main school, such as 2 to 3 miles.

(5) Any expansion would need the agreement of the schools concerned.

(6) To-date no agreements have been reached.

7. Matter for Kent County Council as the Local Authority

(1) Kent County Council is considering an ePetition submitted on the Council's website from 2,576 parents, asking the council to establish a Grammar School in Sevenoaks.

(2) The ePetition is to be considered by County Council on the 29 March 2012.

(3) Below we set out the issues in relation to school places and demand in the local area for both additional selective and non-selective provision to be commissioned, that may enable pupils resident in the Sevenoaks South area to attend a Grammar School in the Sevenoaks District.

8. Provision Planning Analysis

(1) There is a case for more selective and non-selective secondary provision in Sevenoaks South. Data shows that over the next seven years (2011-2018), the Sevenoaks South Year 7 student population will increase from 495 to 681.

(2) In response to the ePetition, this would require the expansion of two, separate grammar schools as all grammar schools in West Kent are single sex. It could be proposed that KCC agree to consider increasing selective provision by 4 forms of entry in total, from September 2015 (2FE for girls and 2FE for boys), recruiting at Year 7 and building incrementally. The proposal would also incorporate establishing a 6th Form when required.

(3) This additional selective provision could be proposed to be located on a single satellite site in southern Sevenoaks. Each annexe would retain its own school's individuality.

(4) There is also a case to propose that KCC consider commissioning at least 2 forms of entry of mixed non-selective provision.

(5) Members should note that there is an application for a free school currently under Secretary of State consideration. The proposal is to establish a new free school to be called 'The Sevenoaks Christian School'. The proposal, if given authority to proceed, would establish a 4FE non-selective provision that would likely be sited in the Sevenoaks south area. This would impact on the level of new provision required in the area.

9. Kent County Council Action

(1) Senior KCC Members and Officers consulted with the Secretary of State in February 2012 to discuss options.

(2) Future discussions would need to take place to discuss funding options. According to the DfE Guidance on Expanding Maintained Mainstream School by Enlargement, para. 22 states 'In accordance with the Government's position that there should be no increase in academic selection, the expansion of grammar schools, and selective places at partially selective schools, are excluded from any capital incentive schemes.' This guidance dated 1st February 2010 is currently being revised but is not yet out for consultation. It would be important that KCC discuss the funding of this proposal with the Department for Education.

(3) Expansion of selective education on a new satellite site has not happened since the 1960s, although Torquay Boys' Grammar School (a selective Academy) in Devon initiated talks in 2011 to create a satellite school seven miles away. The outcome of these talks is not yet known.

(4) Expanding school provision by enlarging the school premises under Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, is undertaken by observing the procedures described in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alteration Regulations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/1289. KCC Officers would take the lead on this process, if required.

(5) Section 21 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 provides for regulations to set out who must decide proposals for any prescribed alterations (i.e. expansions).

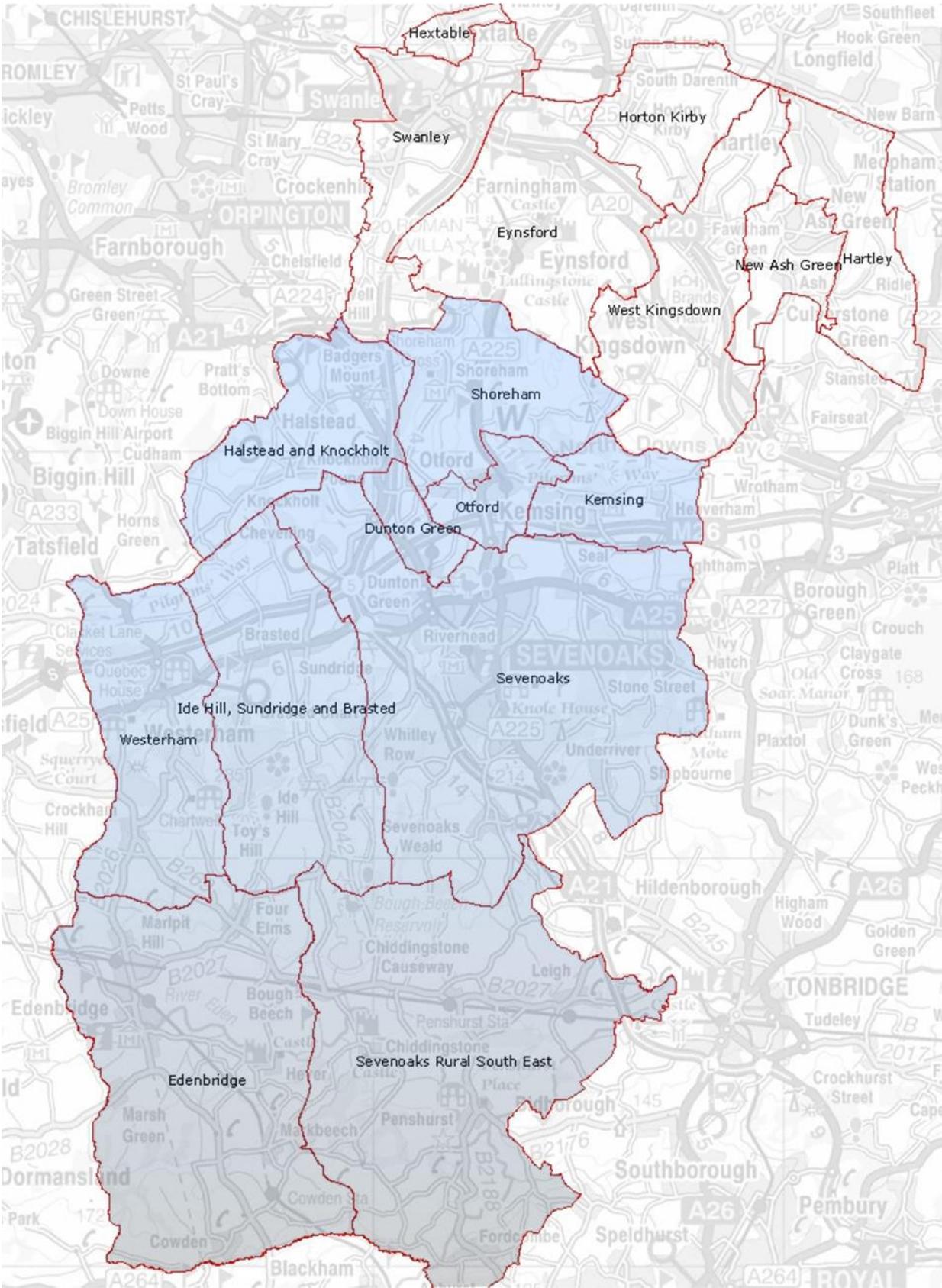
(6) The Secretary of State does not decide statutory proposals relating to schools. The Decision Maker in respect of these school organisation proposals is KCC, with some rights of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator. The DfE does not prescribe the process by which KCC carries out the decision-making function (e.g. full Cabinet or delegation to Cabinet Member or Officials). This is a matter for KCC to determine, whilst having regard to the statutory guidance. Any clear proposal for additional selective provision in Sevenoaks is dependent on consultation with schools and the agreement of selective schools to expand, within the legal framework that exists for such expansion.

10. Recommendation

The recommendation is that in response to an ePetition, Kent County Council pursues proposals to provide 2FE of selective secondary provision for boys, 2FE of selective secondary provision for girls and 2FE of mixed non-selective provision for students resident in the Sevenoaks south area, that would meet legal requirements.

Simon Webb
Area Education Officer, West Kent

Annex A – Sevenoaks Planning areas, showing those shaded areas that are in the Grammar Scheme of Education



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APPENDIX 3

The petition before you shows that local people share concerns regarding the proposed down grading of Ramsgate's Youth Clubs, Artwise and Concorde.

However, the petition is not about changing Kent's policy. These are difficult times, savings have to be made, and there is merit in the policy's aim of attempting to involve the third sector more in the provision in youth work.

The petition concerns the impact of Kent's preferred model of future youth provision on Thanet, and on Ramsgate in particular. Thanet is unique in Kent in consisting of three major towns. It suffers from deprivation indices that rank as some of the worst in the country. Cliftonville West and Margate Central being two of the most deprived wards in England. However, this deprivation is not unique to Margate, four wards in Ramsgate; Newington, Northwood, Eastcliff and Central Harbour are also in the bottom 10%. This is a unique situation in Kent which needs to be recognised.

The new Kent model proposes for Thanet:

A KCC professional youth work delivery, with a building base at Quarterdeck and a senior Youth Work Practitioner being based here responsible for all training and quality assurance.

A Community Youth Tutor operating from the Marlowe Academy on the outskirts of Ramsgate.

A Thanet street-based project which will be operating from a base within Margate's Quarterdeck and working with the Margate Task Force.

Commissioned youth work activities, commissioned from local providers to a total value of £207,000 per annum for an initial three year period.

There is a local consensus that Ramsgate requires its own KCC owned youth centre as a base with professional KCC staffing. There is scope to test the commissioning model at the other KCC owned centre in Ramsgate within whatever overall commissioning budget is agreed for Thanet.

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Report to: County Council – 29 March 2012

Report from: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities

Subject: Youth Service Provision in Ramsgate

Classification: Unrestricted

In March 2012 a petition was submitted to Kent County Council with 1417 signatures referring to the provision of Youth Services in Ramsgate. As a consequence, this matter is referred to County Council. The wording of the petition was as follows:

'We the undersigned petition Kent County Council to retain Concorde and Artwise Youth Centres in Ramsgate as KCC owned and staffed youth centres, and reject the proposal for Quarterdeck in Margate to be the only Youth Centre Hub in Thanet'

The petition has presumably been raised as a response to the public consultation on the future of Youth Services in Kent which took place from 1st August 2011 to 29th October 2011. The proposal for consultation was to deliver a core service level in each district of KCC staff delivering building-based, school-based and street-based provision and for this to be supplemented by the commissioning of youth work services at a local level to extend the delivery of youth work opportunities.

The proposal offers the opportunity for Kent County Council to continue to deliver a first class Youth Service for the young people of Kent whilst working closely with local communities and Locality Boards to make decisions on what youth provision would best serve local communities.

The intention of the proposals has always been to look for new opportunities for communities to have a greater role in shaping and even running their own services. We recognize that local communities are rightly very proud of their local youth service provision, which is why I am taking the time to personally meet with Locality Boards to ensure that we commission exactly the right kind of services for communities like Ramsgate.

KCC retains the statutory duty to provide youth services in the county, and the new model delivers this duty through a blend of directly delivered services and those provided by commissioned organisations; both are subject to the same measures of quality assurance, and stringent mechanisms will be in place to monitor performance.

A meeting of local KCC and Thanet District Council Members was held on Friday 2 March in Margate to discuss proposals for future service provision in Thanet. The Members are asking 'that there are two building provisions under KCC control, one in Margate and one in Ramsgate, that offer equality of service'. This has been agreed and will be recognised within my Key Decision scheduled for late April.