

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 15 March 2007

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE SOUTH MAIDSTONE FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS – THE CORNWALLIS, OLDBOROUGH MANOR AND SENACRE TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE, MAIDSTONE AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH TWO GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMIES

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on issuing a Public Notice to close The Cornwallis, Oldborough Manor and Senacre Technology College and reopen them as two academies on the Cornwallis and Oldborough Manor sites.

Introduction

1. (1) Owing to the urgency created by a delay in receiving ministerial agreement to take the proposal forward, the Chair of the School Organisation Advisory Board (SOAB) took a decision to support the undertaking of a public consultation on the proposal to close The South Maidstone Federation of Schools (New Line Learning Cornwallis, New Line Learning Oldborough Manor and New Line Learning Senacre) and their replacement with two government funded Academies.

(2) The Cornwallis is an 11-19 mixed (non-selective foundation) high school with a roll of 1665 (including 310 in Yrs 12 and 13) and a net capacity of 1260 in years 7-11 (286 in the sixth form). Senacre Technology College is an 11-16 mixed (non-selective foundation) high school with a roll of 609 and a net capacity of 900. Oldborough Manor is an 11-16 mixed (non-selective foundation) high school with 343 on roll and a net capacity of 628. The schools, which are all situated in the South of Maidstone, were formally federated under the brand of New Line Learning in 2005. Attached as *Appendix 1* is a map showing the location of the schools. *Appendix 2 (a-c)* shows dot maps with the current pupil distribution.

(3) The schools serve both rural and urban communities located mainly in the South and South West of Maidstone. This area also includes the 19th most deprived ward in Kent, Park Wood which is amongst the highest 10% of disadvantaged communities in the country. Senacre Technology College and Oldborough Manor serve this particular area. Three other communities in Maidstone feature in the top 20% in the country, High Street, Shepway North and Shepway South.

(4) In Senacre Technology College and Oldborough Manor in particular, the socio-economic profile of the student intake is well below average overall. The proportion of students with Special Educational Needs is above average with Senacre (39.6% including statements), Oldborough Manor (38.5%) and The Cornwallis (20.6%) in 2006. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals (2005) is above the national average with Senacre (26.5%) and Oldborough Manor (32.6%); The Cornwallis has only 4.5% of students eligible for free school meals.

(5)

% 5 A*-C (% 5 A*-C including English and mathematics)	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cornwallis	68 (42)	69 (41)	64 (40)	66 (34)
Oldborough	20 (9)	12 (8)	34 (16)	10 (3)
Senacre	25 (16)	38 (14)	41 (18)	38 (17)

Percentage of pupils attaining 5 A*-C and 5 A*-C including English and mathematics.

KS2-4 Value Added	2004	2005	2006
Cornwallis	1005.5	997.7	1008.4
Oldborough	949.9	971.3	951.5
Senacre	980.1	973.4	1007.8

Key Stage 2 to 4 published Value Added scores (based around 1000) from DfES Achievement and Attainment Tables.

Senacre Technology College was last inspected in April 2005 when it was found to be satisfactory overall. This followed a period when the school was placed in Special Measures after an inspection in January 2001 and was subsequently removed by HMI in January 2003. Attainment on entry is well below average with few students of average and above average ability. Standards have risen at a greater rate than the national trend in recent years and achievement, as demonstrated by the Value Added indicator, is now above the national average. Oldborough Manor was inspected in January 2007 and was deemed to require a Notice to Improve due to low standards. Like Senacre, attainment on entry is well below average. Standards have been erratic in recent years and are well below national averages. Achievement has been below the national average with a Value Added score in 2006 which places the school in the bottom five percent nationally for this measure. The Cornwallis was last inspected in January 2000 and was judged to be a very good school with many strengths and no significant weaknesses. Attainment on entry is below average, with fewer high ability pupils. Standards have been fairly constant in recent years and demonstrate positive achievement.

(6) Establishing the two Academies will have a significant impact on the socio-economic profile of the area by:

- (a) Improving the economic skills base through first class education and training
- (b) Acting as a catalyst for further investment and regeneration in the area
- (c) Engaging the local community to access learning and recreational activities
- (d) Attracting new families to the area for the educational facilities thus improving economic growth and prosperity
- (e) Improving recruitment and retention rate of teachers
- (f) Attracting businesses to the area for the highly skilled workforce
- (g) Inspiring community leadership with a strong belief in a vibrant, creative and prosperous school population
- (h) Providing Academy leadership with a clear vision, strategic planning, qualities which inspire, motivate and influence staff and students, effective team development confident in their innovation and working relationships to act as inspirational role models.

Proposed Size and Nature of the Academies

2. (1) The proposal is to establish two Academies in South East Maidstone. The Cornwallis Academy will have a proposed admission number of 255 and a net capacity for students aged 11 to 16 of 1275, together with 550 pupils in years 12 and 13. The second Academy will be located on the Oldborough Manor site. This will be a 7FE facility with a proposed PAN of 210 and a capacity of 1050 for students aged 11 to 16, organised as two mini schools.

(2) The Academies' proposal provides the opportunity to transform styles of teaching and learning, to improve vocational development and to replace dilapidated buildings with environments, which are modern, fit for purpose and exciting places in which to learn. The vision is to re-model spaces and re-engineer learning in order to create new learning environments which more readily meet the needs of today's students. The model of teaching and learning to be adopted will cater for groups to work within zoned Learning Plazas, which can be adapted according to group size and need to allow for:

- (a) Individual intensive work or small project based groups of pupils working together independently
- (b) Smaller remedial groups
- (c) Year groups split into four sub-learning groups (25-30) pupils
- (d) Whole year group learning

Students from both Academies will be encouraged to continue their learning post-16 at the South Maidstone Federation Sixth Form.

(3) The latest (summer 2006-based) forecasts (see Tables 1 and 2 below), indicate that the current PAN of 110 at Oldborough Manor produces a surplus capacity beyond recommended guidelines for both the Academy and the Maidstone area. The roll in 2006/07 is 343. Currently, Senacre has a PAN of 180 and a roll in 2006/07 of 609.

Table 1:

Maidstone Borough – Secondary School Forecasts for Years 7-11													
DfES no.	School	PAN 2006	Net capacity (7-11)	September 2006 roll	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
4058	Invicta Grammar School	175	825	907	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4059	Swadelands School	180	885	787	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4064	Astor of Hever Community School	150	750	706	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4249	Valley Park Community School	180	885	878	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4522	Maidstone Grammar School	175	875	884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4523	Maidstone Grammar School for Girls	175	830	835	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5401	Maplesden Noakes, The	180	870	828	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5402	Cornwallis, The	255	1,260	1,355	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5413	Oldborough Manor	110	628	343	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5415	Senacre Technology College	180	900	609	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5422	Oakwood Park Grammar	145	700	701	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5432	St Simon Stock Catholic School	180	825	835	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	2,085	10,233	9,668	9,546	9,408	9,357	9,212	9,126	8,969	8,824	8,703	8,686

Table 2:

Maidstone Borough – Secondary School Forecasts for Years 12-13													
DfES no.	School	PAN 2006	6th form net capacity	September 2006 roll	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
4058	Invicta Girls Grammar	175	334	406	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4059	Swadelands School	180	68	96	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4064	Astor of Hever Community School, The	150	117	125	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4249	Valley Park Community School	180	108	132	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4522	Maidstone Grammar School	175	352	374	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4523	Maidstone Grammar School for Girls	175	293	284	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5401	Maplesden Noakes, The	180	153	147	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5402	Cornwallis, The	255	286	310	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5413	Oldborough Manor Community School	110	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5415	Senacre Technology College	180	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5422	Oakwood Park Grammar	145	215	244	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5432	St Simon Stock Catholic School	180	188	189	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	2,085	2,114	2,307	2,241	2,254	2,245	2,247	2,206	2,192	2,181	2,190	2,176

Academy Proposal

3. (1) The proposed Academies would open in September 2007 on their current sites. It is anticipated that Senacre pupils will move to the Oldborough Manor site at a future date prior to the opening of new buildings, possibly in Summer 2008. In conjunction with a new build for Oldborough/Senacre, the existing Oldborough Manor buildings would be demolished. Both sites are described as being in a dilapidated state. The Cornwallis would be eventually re-built on its present site with an estimated completion date of September 2010.

(2) The sixth form would remain on the Cornwallis site and a vocational centre will be incorporated on the Oldborough/Senacre site.

(3) The Academies will be at the core of the community and will be characterised by:

- (a) Smaller learning groups and smaller scale learning communities
- (b) A greater emphasis on the values of democracy fairness and respect
- (c) More opportunities for students' views to be listened to and acted upon
- (d) A stronger focus on the quality of relationships
- (e) A more holistic approach to teaching and learning
- (f) A thematic approach to the curriculum and more cross-curricular teaching
- (g) Equal opportunities for all regardless of which Academy a student attends
- (h) High quality vocational teaching and learning of a wide range of vocational courses to improve employability and forge links with industry.

(4) Each of the Academies would have a different specialism. The new Academy on the Oldborough Manor site would aim to develop a specialism in Business & Enterprise. This focus would develop students' entrepreneurial skills, giving them much greater confidence in tackling all areas of the curriculum and enhance career expectations and attainment. The Cornwallis became a specialist technology college in 1996. It has been highly successful in developing a rich ICT driven environment. In April 2006, the school was awarded an ICT mark by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA), one of only 20 schools in the country to be recognised. In addition to the specialisms, the vocational centre would provide a gateway to skills and opportunities hitherto not available to disengaged young people. Students would be able to take new qualifications such as Specialised Diplomas and Apprenticeships and would learn in an environment which would facilitate the transition between the classroom and the world of industry. In addition, strong relationships would be forged with local businesses and employers.

Public Consultation Process

4. (1) A consultation document attached as Appendix 3 was circulated according to the County Procedures for Review. This included Local Members, District Council, Parish Councils, local libraries, schools within Maidstone 1 and Maidstone 2 Clusters, Members of Parliament and other interested parties.

(2) Approximately 4,000 copies of the document were circulated.

(3) The document included a separate form on which respondents could express their views.

(4) Due to the sizeable audience which the consultation covered, a decision was taken to run two public meetings on 21 February and 22 February 2007. On the evening of 21 February there were 82 members of the public in attendance and on the evening of 22 February there were 78 members of the public in attendance.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

5. (1) The consultation period ended on 2 March 2007 and 163 responses were received, as follows:

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parent of a child at the schools				
Cornwallis	26	44	2	72
Oldborough	6	4	0	10
Senacre	3	23	0	26
Total (parents)	35	71	2	108
Member of staff at the schools				
Cornwallis	9	0	1	10
Oldborough	0	0	0	0
Senacre	1	3	1	5
Total (staff)	10	3	2	15
Others				
Governor of the schools	3	0	0	3
Parent of child at another school	0	3	0	3
Member of staff at another school	1	0	0	1
Governor of another school	0	1	0	1
Other interested party	4	25	3	32
Total (other)	8	29	3	40
Grand total	53	103	7	163

A summary of the consultation responses is attached as Appendix 4. Responses have been summarised according to whether the response was from a Cornwallis, Senacre or Oldborough interested party. A further category, 'other representations' has also been included (for example, responses from the general public and other schools).

Public Meeting Responses

(2) A summary of comments, views and responses from both evenings is attached as Appendix 5 (for the evening of 21st February 2007) and Appendix 6 (for the evening of 22nd February 2007).

Views of the Local Members

6. (1) The three Local Members with ward responsibility for the South Maidstone Federation are Mr Eric Hotson (The Cornwallis), Mr Brian Wood (Senacre Technology College) and Mr Alan Chell (Oldborough Manor).

(2) **Mr. Brian Wood** comments that the two consultation meetings were both held at Cornwallis School, which was perceived as a disadvantage to many people in the area, owing to the lack of public transport to Boughton Monchelsea. Many parents were therefore unable to attend. His view is that the consultation should have been held on all three sites to maximise the opportunity of people participating, and notes that one of the nights chosen clashed with the Local Board meeting, thereby denying opportunity for some County Members to attend.

(3) Whilst supporting efforts to improve education opportunities within NLL, there is some local opposition to this proposal. Mr. Wood has great concerns that removing secondary school provision from within Park Wood ward is not prudent given the levels of planned housebuilding for the area, and that this community will continue to feel disadvantaged. There is also likely to be an increase in traffic flows at peak times at the two sites proposed to be retained.

(4) **Mr. Eric Hotson** attended the second public meeting and represented Maidstone Borough Council as well as his constituents of Maidstone Rural South, as a KCC Local Member. The views of Maidstone Borough Council, which are shared by Mr. Hotson are represented below.

Views of the Local Members of Parliament

7. (1) The Right Honourable **Anne Widdecombe MP** has expressed concern that there has been inadequate opportunity for parents at Cornwallis to be consulted. She is also anxious that the standards achieved at Cornwallis and the school's popularity must be maintained. Miss Widdecombe feels that the proposal may dilute the quality of education at Cornwallis. Parents of children currently attending Oldborough and Senacre have contacted Miss Widdecombe's office to express concern about the journeys their children would have to undertake to the new Academy on the Oldborough Manor site.

(2) In conclusion, she understands the merits of combining Oldborough and Senacre but sees no merit in the involvement of Cornwallis in the proposal.

8. The Right Honourable **Hugh Robertson MP** has declined to comment on this proposal but has given his backing to the views of the Local KCC Member, and Leader of Maidstone Borough Council, Mr. Eric Hotson.

Views of the Governing Body

9. (1) The Federation's Governing Body is in full support of the proposal. The Federation sees this as an opportunity to improve educational outputs in the South Maidstone area and the life chances of significant numbers of young people.

(2) The Academies Programme is viewed as a 'once in a lifetime opportunity' for these three schools, but if unsuccessful, the Governing Body see little opportunity before 2018 to improve the facilities of the schools in the South Maidstone Federation in any significant way.

Views of Maidstone 1 Cluster Board

10. (1) Maidstone 1 Cluster Board **supports** the closure of Senacre and Oldborough and the reopening as an Academy and can see good reason for regenerating those two schools.

(2) Maidstone 1 Cluster Board **does not support** The Cornwallis becoming an Academy. In their view this school does not meet the criteria that is normally applied to an Academy proposal and that the current federated arrangements are not reason enough to include The Cornwallis in the proposal especially as there has been no evaluation to their knowledge of the benefits of the NLL Federation.

(3) Maidstone 1 Cluster Board **does not support** the sixth form being wholly placed at The Cornwallis and feels that this should be split between the two sites.

Concerns:

(4) Maidstone 1 Cluster Board feel that their lack of involvement in the initial planning stages has meant that they have been uninformed of the wider implications and that their views are being sought too late in the process to affect any change to the proposal.

(5) By increasing the size of the sixth form at The Cornwallis, Maidstone 1 Cluster Board is concerned that the numbers will detract from other sixth form rolls across Maidstone 1 and Maidstone 2 Cluster Schools.

(6) The Board wondered if the planned numbers really do take account of the decreasing rolls projected in secondaries across Maidstone. A working group had just been put into operation to look at falling rolls and this decision was being requested ahead of any wider discussion.

(7) Other secondary schools in Maidstone (Maidstone 1 in particular) have not benefited from capital improvements of any significance and are in growing need of capital investment. Lack of investment in these schools will make the new Academies more attractive to parents and pupils.

(8) Maidstone 1 Board requests that consideration is given to ring-fencing an amount of the capital receipt from the Senacre site to invest in schools in Maidstone 1 or at the very least to direct capital funding that would otherwise have been invested in the three Academy school sites as a matter of course, to Maidstone 1 secondary schools.

(9) Other funding streams which have traditionally given priority to Senacre and Oldborough because they are in areas of high deprivation areas, should be redirected to Maidstone 1 (especially Astor of Hever) to redress the balance of regeneration.

Views of Maidstone 2 Cluster Board

11. (1) The proposal was discussed at a Cluster Board meeting in February. The MC2 Cluster Board felt that a strong representation of the three NLL schools within Cluster activities was important and expressed a keen desire that connections with local schools and the Cluster in general should be further enhanced in the future. The Board would not wish to progress to 'Academy' status to result in drawing back from a current, clear commitment to local participation. Furthermore, the Board would welcome additional opportunities to discuss NLL innovations.

(2) The Cluster Board were also aware that there has been some negative criticism of the NLL schools (particularly from parents), the Board aims to promote positive perceptions of all schools within the Cluster – thus the active participation of NLL is considered vital.

(3) Some concern was raised regarding the impact on other local schools of a large post-16 facility for academic studies at the Cornwallis site. The development of increased vocational opportunities based on the Oldborough site was viewed positively.

(4) In the light of the above, MC2 Cluster Board wishes to express support for the proposals to close the three NLL schools and to open two academies on the Cornwallis and Oldborough sites. It is considered that this will provide enhanced educational opportunities for children, young people and the local community.

Views of Parish Councils

12. (1) Loose Parish Council is concerned that local residents will be adversely affected by an increase in the volume of traffic which they already consider to be a problem.

(2) The Parish Council also considers that footpaths in the Boughton Road area are in places inadequate. It believes that a second access to the Oldborough Manor site is necessary.

(3) The Parish Council believes that these issues must be addressed, together with ensuring children's safety in their journeys to school.

13. Linton Parish Council do not object to the proposal but have concerns over the potential for additional traffic on Heath Road, generated by an expanded sixth form (from 300 to 550 pupils) at Cornwallis School. Some parish councillors have decided to respond on an individual basis to this consultation, giving their own personal views.

Views from Maidstone Borough Council

14. (1) Maidstone Borough Council is generally in support of the proposal as the possibility of two Academies gives an opportunity for regeneration of this area of Maidstone.

(2) If the second Academy is developed on the Oldborough site there is likely to be opportunities within the KCC and Maidstone Borough Councils' budgets to fund safer ways for students to get to school, including safer routes to walk to school. Maidstone Borough Council hope that by 2010 the KCC free school buses for 11-16 year olds scheme (currently at the pilot stage) will be in operation, which would be a major help.

(3) Councillors often have to attend appeals meetings on behalf of parents, trying to get their children into particular schools, and most will not even consider Oldborough as an option at present. It is hoped that these plans will encourage more parents to take pride in considering a secondary education for their child at Oldborough School.

(4) Maidstone Borough Council considers itself to be a watchdog for this proposal, with their Planning Department having a major role to play in the development of the sites at Senacre and Oldborough. The Council is keen to resolve any early concerns and progress this scheme for the benefit of local children.

Views of the Area Education Officer

15. (1) The Area Education Officer considers that this is an innovative proposal, designed to enhance the life opportunities of young people in the area served by the New Line Learning Schools.

(2) The volume of response to the Public Consultation has been relatively small in comparison to the combined rolls of the New Line Learning schools. A number of respondents have recognised the need to replace the existing New Line Learning buildings but certain issues have been raised with a frequency which merits further comment.

- *Concern about possible friction between Oldborough Manor and Senacre students if brought together on a single site.* The governors and senior management of the Federation recognise the importance of avoiding this. Their intention is to mix pupils from the two schools rather than organising them in such a way as to perpetuate separate identities.
- *Concern about academic standards at Cornwallis.* The Chair of the Federation's governing body has stated that the governing body is fully committed to securing high educational outcomes for Cornwallis students and believes that the academy route provides the only means currently available to achieve the facilities necessary to facilitate this.
- *Concern about the additional distance which some current Senacre students would have to travel to reach the Oldborough Manor site.* A travel survey carried out by WSP Development and Transportation Ltd for New Line Learning in 2006 found that, '...the average distance travelled by Senacre pupils will increase by 24%. The relocation will result in Senacre pupils travelling, on average, a very similar distance to that already travelled by Oldborough students'. A further conclusion was that with relocation, 79% of Senacre students would live within the 'preferred maximum' walking distance to school as defined by the Institution of Highways & Transportation guidelines.
- *Concern about a potential increase in traffic in roads leading to Oldborough Manor's vehicular entrance off Boughton Lane.* This issue has largely been raised by residents in Loose, including the Parish Council and the North Loose Residents' Association. The travel survey (above) identified a need, if the two schools were to amalgamate at Oldborough, to develop a travel plan with the following features:
 1. Designation of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator.
 2. Travel awareness and promotion campaigns as part of the curriculum.
 3. A staff car-sharing scheme, including an intranet register to match those prepared to share and a guaranteed ride home safeguard.
 4. A pupil lift-sharing scheme supported by an intranet register.
 5. High quality, secure and sheltered cycle parking.
 6. Provision of showers, changing facilities and lockers.
 7. Seek to establish a cycle purchase discount scheme with a local cycle retailer, with repair/maintenance advice and support.
 8. Improved pedestrian/cycle routes to the campus from the east.
 9. Better footways/cycleways within the campus.
 10. Undertake annual travel surveys of both staff and pupils to gauge the success of the travel plan, to identify problems and to help amend and improve the plan.

(3) *A response received from the Chair of Governors of Five Acre Wood Special School* (which shares the Oldborough Manor site) raises the following areas of concern.

- (a) Under the Special School Review, Five Acre Wood is required to expand from a roll of 105 to 210. The academy project must take account of this, including protecting Five Acre Wood's access to green spaces for sport and recreation.
- (b) Proposals must address anti-social behaviour by secondary school pupils (including bullying of Five Acre Wood pupils) if the academy goes ahead.
- (c) There is a need to address the current poor level of site security in relation to unauthorised persons on site, management of traffic flow on site, and the management of health and safety during construction of the new academy.
- (d) The importance of there being Five Acre Wood representation at a senior level in the management of the project.

(4) The development of an academy on the Oldborough Manor site will inevitably have repercussions for Five Acre Wood Special School, requiring consultation and close co-operation to ensure that there is no overall negative impact on this school's work.

- (a) *A preference expressed by some respondents for Oldborough Manor and Senacre schools to amalgamate on the Senacre site.* A new academy for 1050 pupils, together with a Vocational Centre will require 1.50Ha more than the developable area of the Senacre site. Furthermore, this calculation does not make any allowance for the school farm.
- (b) *Concern about the influence of sponsors.* If proposals go ahead, the Local Authority will be a sponsor and therefore represented on the governing body, together with representatives of staff and parents. The academies will continue to be overwhelmingly state funded.

(5) The above concerns are not believed to be insurmountable but will need to be addressed if the proposal for two academies goes ahead. This paper seeks agreement for the Local Authority to close Cornwallis, Senacre and Oldborough Manor schools so that they might reopen as two academies on the Cornwallis and Oldborough Manor sites. If this is agreed, separate consultation will follow on the development of the academies which will ensure that the concerns of stakeholders are taken fully into account. This proposal represents the only current means of replacing the Federation's poor buildings stock with premises which will fully support the curriculum which the schools need to deliver, if they are to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Resource Implications

Capital

16. (1) KCC's contribution to the cost of this project will be part or all of the capital receipt from the sale of the Senacre School Site. This will supplement funding received from the DfES.

Revenue

(2) The Academies will receive their revenue funding directly from the DfES each year. It will be funded at a rate equivalent to other Kent specialist schools.

Human

(3) Consultation will take place in accordance with the requirements of TUPE. Costs of new staffing (TUPE applies to current staff) and costs associated with TUPE, including any valid redundancies of staff who cannot transfer or be deployed elsewhere in Kent schools, are borne, in part, by the DfES.

Equality Issues

17. The funding agreement between the Academy Trust and the Department of Education and Skills will require the school to have regard to the Codes of Practice on School Admissions and SEN. The Academy will need to comply with legislation regarding Disability Discrimination and Employment Law etc. The Proposal does not raise any equalities issues.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

18. Early discussions will take place with Maidstone Borough Council and Kent Highways. They will be fully consulted as part of the design and development phase of the new Academies and it is also expected that a travel plan will be produced prior to the opening of the Academies.

School Improvement Implications

19. The closure of the current schools and the setting up of the Academies would allow for new facilities, flexibility of curriculum and recruitment of high quality staff. It is intended that the investment in facilities and curriculum and funding flexibility that the Academies would bring, would have the positive impact on standards that is required for the students of the South Maidstone Federated Schools and for improved life opportunities in the South Maidstone communities.

Proposed Timetable

20. If it is decided that a public notice should be issued in respect of the proposal, the following timetable is likely to apply:

Cabinet Member decision	End March 2007
Issue public notice	19 April 2007
End of public notice period	31 May 2007
Implementation (subject to approval by DfES)	September 2007

21. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:
- (a) The closure of The Cornwallis, Senacre Technology College and Oldborough Manor Schools on their replacement with two government funded Academies;
 - (b) The sale of the Senacre Technology College site to provide sponsorship for the development of both academies, which in turn, delivers capital funding for the project from the Government.

Chris Jones
Area Education Officer
Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling
Tel: 01233 898560

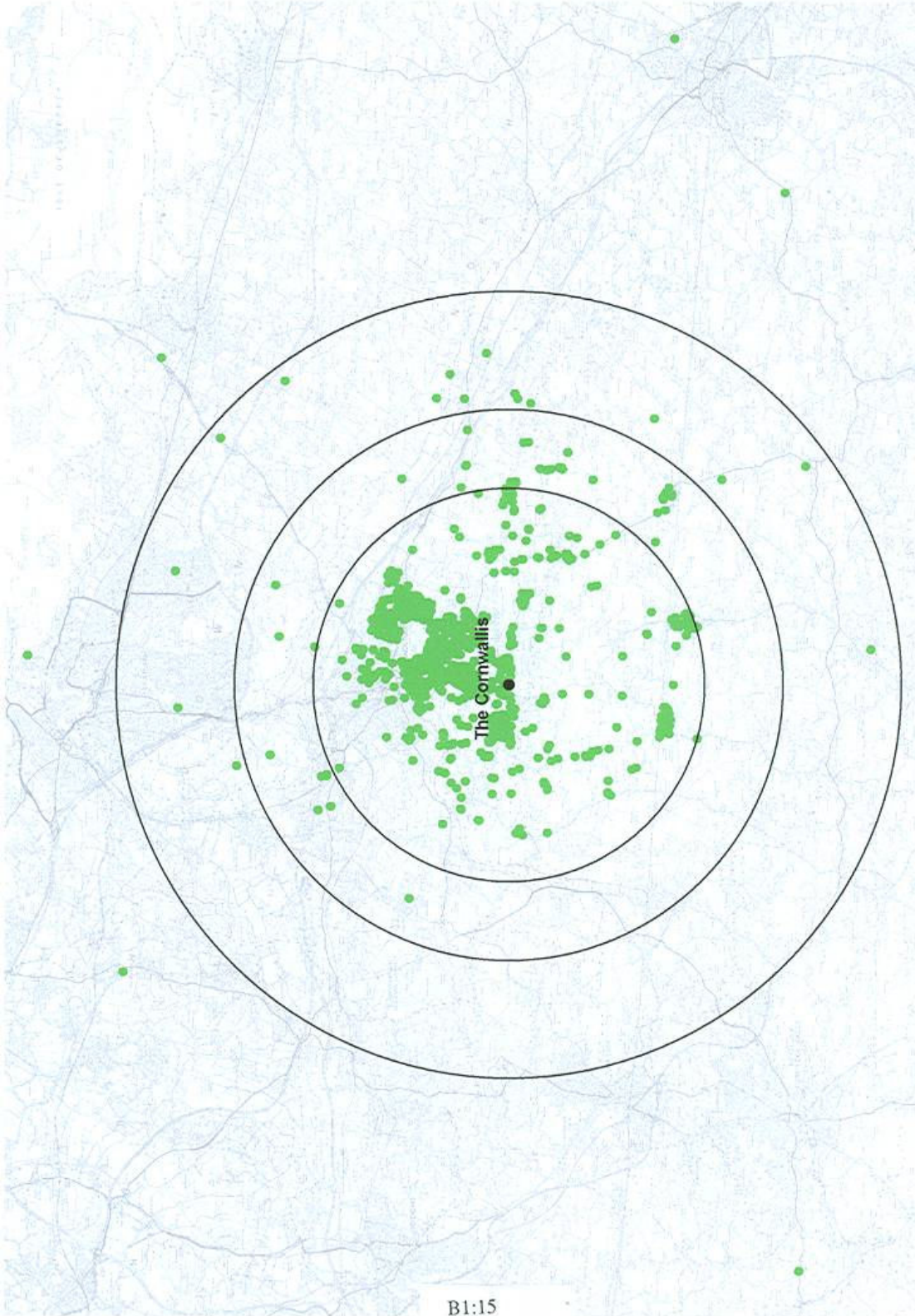
The Local Members are Mr B Wood, Mr A Chell and Mr E Hotson

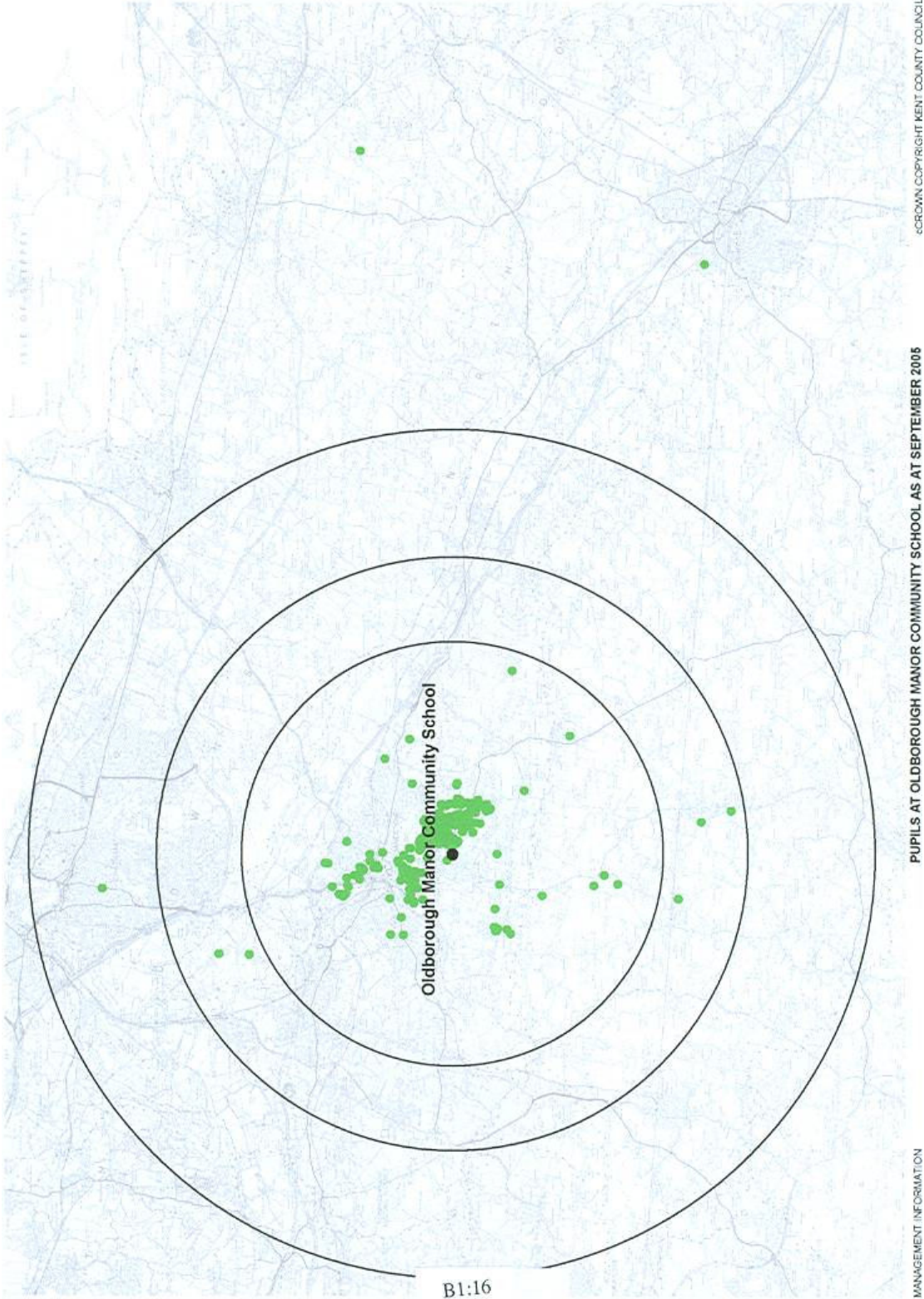
Background Documents:

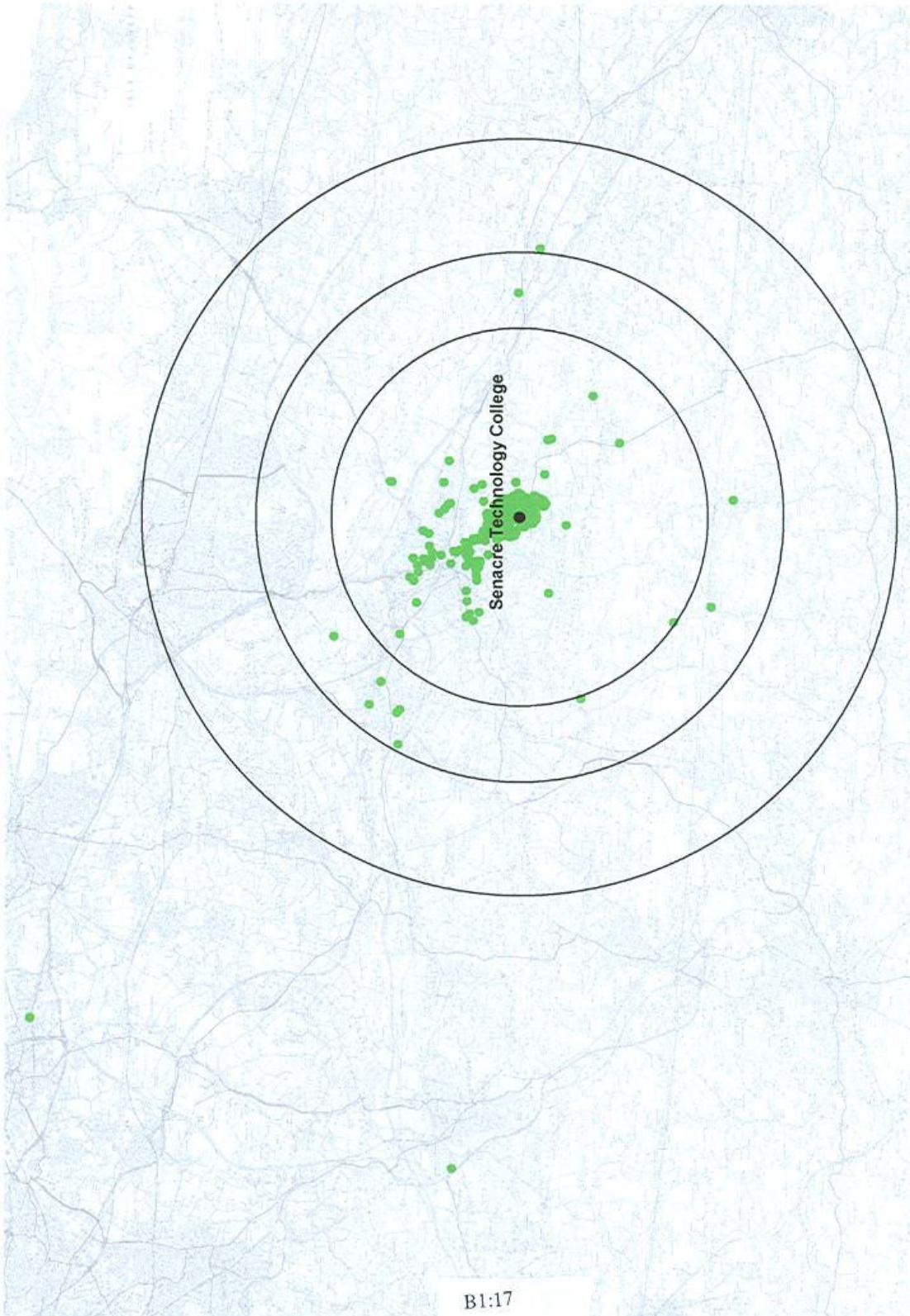
None

Other Sources of Information:

Expression of Interest document
LA School Organisation Plan







PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE SOUTH MAIDSTONE FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS: NEW LINE LEARNING CORNWALLIS, NEW LINE LEARNING OLDBOROUGH MANOR AND NEW LINE LEARNING SENACRE, MAIDSTONE AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH TWO ACADEMIES

Why are we consulting you?

The South Maidstone Federation and Kent County Council are considering closing The South Maidstone Federation of Schools (The Cornwallis, Oldborough Manor and Senacre Technology College) and replacing them with two Government funded Academy schools on the Cornwallis and Oldborough Manor sites. The proposal is to establish two Academies in the South West area of Maidstone from September 2007. One Academy would be situated on the Cornwallis School site and continue to develop the existing school's specialism in Technology. The second Academy would be located on the Oldborough Manor site and have a Business and Enterprise specialism.

This document sets out the reasons for the proposal and how the consultation period will run. *No final decision has yet been made and none will be made until the consultation process is complete and the views of all interested parties have been considered.* The consultation timetable is at the end of this document, and includes the dates of two public meetings which will be held in February.

PLEASE USE THIS CONSULTATION AS A CHANCE TO PUT FORWARD YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSAL

Why is change necessary?

The South Maidstone Federation of Schools (New Line Learning Cornwallis, Oldborough Manor and Senacre Technology College) serve both rural and urban communities located in the South and South West areas of Maidstone. Some of these wards are amongst the most disadvantaged in Kent. In order to raise education standards and better serve the community, the Academies will:

- Improve education outcomes for all young people
- Improve pupils' learning and future job prospects through first class education and training
- act as a means of attracting investment and regeneration to the area
- engage the local community to access learning and recreational activities
- attract businesses to the area

What are Academies?

Academy schools are a type of education provision set up by Central Government six years ago. They are aimed at schools in challenging circumstances as a mechanism for raising standards. Academies are funded, managed and organised in a very different way from conventional schools. Some important differences are:

- They are publicly funded independent schools with private and voluntary sector sponsorship. They charge no fees but are not local authority schools.
- They are supported by sponsors and receive Government grant. Each sponsoring body agrees with the Government how the institution will be governed and a board of governors will be set up which will include representation from local interest groups.
- They are all-ability schools with a broad curriculum but with a special emphasis on one part of the curriculum.
- They will be inclusive schools, admitting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities as appropriate and playing their part with other schools in supporting challenging pupils.
- They share their facilities with other schools and the wider community.
- Sponsors will have freedom over management structures and such issues as length of the school day, term dates and staffing.

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will be used to support all aspects of learning and will support activities beyond the normal school day in partnership with the wider community.

What is being proposed?

The proposal is to close the South Maidstone Federation of Schools (New Line Learning Cornwallis, Oldborough Manor and Senacre Technology College) on 31 August 2007, and to open two new Federated Academy schools, with the same pupils on 1 September 2007 on their current sites. The two new Academies will have one headteacher and one governing body.

One Academy would open on the existing site of the Cornwallis School. It is intended that this school will be completely rebuilt, possibly by September 2010. It would have 1275 places (eight and a half forms of entry) for boys and girls aged 11-16 years. It would also have a 550 pupil sixth form. The second Academy would be located on the Oldborough Manor site in new buildings. It is anticipated that Senacre pupils would move to the Oldborough Manor site in the latter part of 2008. This would create an academy with 1050 pupil places (seven forms of entry) for boys and girls aged 11-16 years. A Vocational Centre would be incorporated within the second Academy to support the development of a wider range of vocational provision.

The development of these two academies would provide an opportunity to transform teaching and learning environments for pupils through new buildings designed for 21st Century learning. This would be achieved by creating 'zoned learning plazas', in which pupils would have the facilities to work individually or in small project groups.

To meet the needs of pupils and the South Maidstone community, it is proposed that each of the Academies should have a different specialism. The Academy based on the Cornwallis site would continue to develop its specialism in Technology. The second Academy would have a Business and Enterprise specialism.

The closure of the three schools and the setting up of two Academies would create new facilities which would enable greater flexibility and innovation in the curriculum. Experience suggests that it would also assist

the recruitment of high quality staff. It is expected that staff and pupils of the South Maidstone Federation will automatically transfer across into the two Academies.

What are the Transport and Road Safety Implications?

The two Academies will continue to serve the South West area of Maidstone. There will not be any increase in school traffic. Community use of the Academies will be managed and designated parking will be provided.

Consultation Arrangements

If, having read this document, you would like to comment on the proposals, there are several opportunities for doing so:

- Complete and return the Response Form included in this document.
- Write to **Chris Jones, Area Education Officer (Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling) at Mid Kent Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU**. Please note that in the interests of economy, letters will **not** be acknowledged or responded to **BUT** careful note will be taken of their content.
- LETTERS / RESPONSE FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 2 MARCH 2007**

Come to one of the public meetings to listen to discussions about the proposal and also have the opportunity of putting forward your views. Public meetings will be held on:

Date: Wednesday 21 February 2007
Time: 7.00pm
Venue: The Cornwallis School, Hubbards Lane, Linton, Maidstone ME17 4HX

OR

Date: Thursday 22 February 2007
Time: 7.00pm
Venue: The Cornwallis School, Hubbards Lane, Linton, Maidstone ME17 4HX

The meeting will be chaired by a County Councillor. Parents/carers and others will have the opportunity to put forward their views. Officers from the Local Authority will be present to talk about the proposals and to answer questions.

Mr Eric Hotson is the County Councillor for The Cornwallis School. Mr Brian Wood is the County Councillor for Senacre Technology College and Mr Alan Chell is the County Councillor for Oldborough Manor. If you wish to discuss this proposal with these County Councillors they can be contacted through the County Council's Members Desk on 01622 694434.

What happens next?

All of the views received, either in writing or at the public meetings, will be reported to the School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 15 March 2007. Meetings of the School Organisation Advisory Board are open to the public and the press and reports presented to the Board are available on request from:

The County Secretariat
Sessions House
County Hall
MAIDSTONE
Kent
ME14 1XQ
Tel: 01622 694269

Appendix 1 sets out the complete process for public consultation and decision making.

The proposals set out in this document are being put forward as a basis for consultation only. It should be emphasised that NO DECISIONS have yet been made and none will be made until the consultations have been completed and all local views have been carefully considered.

The County Council's major objective is to ensure that the outcome of this proposal has local support and is in the best educational interests of the children involved.

PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS

Dr Ian Craig
Director of Operations
Children Families and Education
Kent County Council

26 January 2007

Consultation and decision making Timetable

26 January 2007	Consultation period begins
21 February 2007 and 22 February 2007	Public meetings to be held in the school hall at the Cornwallis School, Hubbards Lane, Linton, Maidstone ME17 4HX
2 March 2007	Final date for written comments
15 March 2007	*School Organisation Advisory Board
End March 2007	Cabinet Member Decision
19 April 2007	Public Notice issued
31 May 2007	Closing date for Representation Period
September 2007	Implementation

*This meeting is open to the public and will take place at County Hall in Maidstone. Times are available from the Council Secretariat on 01622 694287.

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE SOUTH MAIDSTONE FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS: NEW LINE LEARNING CORNWALLIS, NEW LINE LEARNING OLDBOROUGH MANOR AND NEW LINE LEARNING SENACRE, MAIDSTONE AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH TWO ACADEMIES

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 2 MARCH 2007

To: Chris Jones
 Area Education Officer (Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling)
 Mid Kent Office, Kroner House
 Eurogate Business Park
 Ashford
 Kent TN24 8XU
 Fax: 01233 898500

You can also email your views to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

Do you agree with the proposal to close the South Maidstone Federation of Schools and replace them with Two Academies?

Yes No

I am:-

The parent of a child at the school:

NLL Cornwallis
 NLL Oldborough Manor
 NLL Senacre

The parent of a child at another school

A member of staff at the school

NLL Cornwallis
 NLL Oldborough Manor
 NLL Senacre

A member of staff at another school

A governor of the school

NLL Cornwallis
 NLL Oldborough Manor
 NLL Senacre

A governor at another school

Other interested party

Name of other school or interested party

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE SOUTH MAIDSTONE FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS: NEW LINE LEARNING CORNWALLIS, NEW LINE LEARNING OLDBOROUGH MANOR AND NEW LINE LEARNING SENACRE, MAIDSTONE AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH TWO ACADEMIES

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 2 MARCH 2007

Name:
Address:

Note:

Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully, and in this instance, used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.

My comments are as follows: (please continue your comments overleaf if necessary)

--

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN RESPONSES TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Key

- C** Representations from those with an interest in or association with The Cornwallis School
- O** Representations from those with an interest in or association with Oldborough Manor School
- S** Representations from those with an interest in or association with Senacre School
- M** Other representations (general public and others)

Against

Respondents indicated that they were against the proposal and made the following comments:

- Concern about potential friction between pupils at the two schools when they are brought together (related to having two separate schools at Oldborough Manor)/existing school names should not be retained.
C 2 O 0 S 5 M 2
- Too great a distance to Oldborough Manor site for pupils who live nearer to Senacre.
C 3 O 0 S 8 M 4
- Concern about the safety (and risk of assault) of pupils walking to Oldborough Manor.
C 2 O 1 S 0 M 1
- Retain Senacre and close Oldborough (Oldborough Manor is poorly regarded).
C 0 O 0 S 6 M 1
- Additional traffic in Boughton Lane, at its junction with Loose Road, and in the area generally – also associated safety and pollution issues.
C 6 O 0 S 6 M 21
- General disruption and traffic (contractors' vehicles) arising from building the new schools (impact on educational standards).
C 5 O 0 S 0 M 2
- Concern that there may be a shortage of secondary school places in the South Maidstone area in the future.
C 1 O 0 S 0 M 1
- Wish to see the leadership of the schools reviewed as they become Academies.
C 1 O 1 S 0 M 0

- Antisocial behaviour (e.g. litter, graffiti and poor behaviour of pupils) is already claimed to be a problem for residents in the Boughton Lane area – concern that this will increase due to the greater number of pupils.

C 0 O 0 S 0 M 5

- The Federation has not led to improvements at Oldborough Manor.

C 0 O 2 S 0 M 0

- Wish to see class sizes kept as small as possible.

C 1 O 0 S 1 M 0

- The real answer is to scrap selection at age 11.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Concern among parents about recent direction in terms of teaching methods and standards/pace of change.

C 11 O 0 S 2 M 0

- Why change Cornwallis when it's already a successful school?

C 8 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Should not be closing schools – they should be smaller. Funding should be used to rebuild all three schools on their current sites.

C 5 O 0 S 5 M 3

- Concern about the performance of Academies nationally.

C 3 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Concern about inadequacy of parent representation on Academies' Governing Bodies.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Concern that Cornwallis is not committed to supporting pupils with SEN; also that this may in the future extend to the second Academy.

C 2 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Suspicion about the motives and influence of sponsors.

C 9 O 0 S 1 M 0

- Concern about the potential impact on Five Acre Wood Special School.

C 0 O 0 S 0 M 2

- Concern that parents/stakeholders have not been kept informed as consideration of Academies has been taking place/meetings should also have taken place at Oldborough and Senacre schools.

C 3 O 0 S 1 M 1

- New buildings won't raise standards/ (new) buildings don't 'make' a school.

C 4 O 0 S 2 M 2

- Cornwallis should be independent of the other schools / disband the Federation

C 7 O 0 S 0 M 0

For

Respondents indicated that they were in favour of the proposal but made the following comments:

- Unsure about the benefits to Cornwallis as a result of this proposal.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Concern about the pace of change and speed of consultation (a period of stability for the Federation is required).

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Need to think about education/management of pupils whilst rebuilding is taking place.

C 4 O 0 S 1 M 1

- Concern about increased traffic/safety of pedestrians.

C 0 O 0 S 1 M 2

- Too great a distance to the Oldborough Manor site for pupils living nearer to Senacre.

C 0 O 0 S 1 M 0

- Pupils enjoy wider opportunities as a result of the Federation, through the schools working together.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Opportunity to upgrade buildings and resources which are currently in a poor state.

C 5 O 1 S 0 M 3

- Development opportunities for staff are already greater due to the schools working together and will further increase with Academy status.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Enhanced opportunities to attract high quality staff.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 1

- Academies will enhance children's education, through improvements to their environment.

C 2 O 3 S 0 M 3

- Concern that start and finish times of the school day/school year at the Academies should remain in line with other schools in the area.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 1

- Wish to see behaviour addressed as the schools become Academies.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Wish to see leadership of the schools reviewed as they become Academies.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Criteria for admission to Cornwallis should be distance from the school, not a list of feeder schools (implication is that Cornwallis is selecting children from schools in more advantaged areas while rejecting children in Shepway and Park Wood).

C 0 O 0 S 1 M 0

- Wish to see class sizes kept as small as possible.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Support for a vocational centre.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Concern about the schools losing their individuality.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Concern about the influence of sponsors.

C 2 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Importance of consulting/informing stakeholders as the project progresses.

C 2 O 0 S 0 M 0

Undecided

Respondents indicated that they were undecided and made the following comments:

- Concern about continual change.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Concern about sponsors.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Uncertainty about the value of Academies.

C 2 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Increased volume of traffic including safety considerations.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 5

- Concerns over perceived increase in anti-social behaviour.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 1

- Concern about new teaching methods.

C 1 O 0 S 0 M 0

- Would support the proposal provided it enhances educational opportunities for disadvantaged children.

C 1 O 0 S 1 M 0

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

**Proposed closure of the South Maidstone Federation of schools:
New Line Learning Cornwallis, Oldborough Manor and Senacre
and their replacement with two Academies**

**Summary of the Public Meeting held on
Wednesday 21 February 2007 at 7.00 pm
NLL Cornwallis, Hubbards Lane, Linton, Maidstone, ME17 4HX**

Attended by:

Mrs. Valerie Dagger, KCC Member for Malling West (Chair)
Dr. Ian Craig, Director of Operations, KCC
Dr. Chris Gerry, Executive Headteacher, New Line Learning
Mr. Ray Harris, Chair of Governors
Mr. Chris Jones, Area Education Officer, Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling
Members of the Public and school representatives

Issue or Comment	Response
<p>CORNWALLIS PARENT:</p> <p>Recognise need for new facilities but concern about Academy status and possible subsequent lack of independence. Cornwallis is not in socially deprived area, nor a failing school – these are key criteria for Academies so why two Academies?</p> <p>Results of Academies still unproven.</p> <p>Cornwallis already good at working with other stakeholders so what extra would be gained?</p> <p>One of the benefits of Academies is that they are out of the control of the Local Authority but if it is one of the sponsors they are involved.</p>	<p>Two Academies because this is a 'package deal'. Academy programme aimed at poorest areas and provides state of the art facilities. Oldborough and Senacre in deprived areas and part of Federation.</p> <p>Previous City Technology Colleges did take a while to raise achievement but they are now among some of the most improved schools in the Country. Results are unproven but one Academy in Kent has improved results and value added in its first year.</p> <p>Little will change in terms of what is offered educationally but facilities will improve. Buildings may not make a school but good facilities do.</p> <p>Regarding Local Authority sponsorship, KCC are unusual nationally in that it will not support an Academy bid unless it is involved. Potential of £60m investment for the rebuilds which we should not turn our backs on.</p>

<p>Could KCC influence timing of rebuilding of schools via the Building Schools for the Future programme?</p>	<p>KCC could have limited influence on the BSF timetable but Maidstone is way down on the priority list. Currently working on 'Phase 3'. Maidstone is 'Phase 13'.</p>
<p>CORNWALLIS PARENT:</p> <p>Want to be reassured about how Academies' admissions criteria would include Looked After Children.</p>	<p>New Code of Practice requires Academies to prioritise LAC. Furthermore the authority can challenge any school's admissions criteria with the Schools' Adjudicator.</p>
<p>SENACRE PARENT:</p> <p>Moved son from Cornwallis to Senacre because former failing SEN son. In favour of Academy status but why close Senacre not Oldborough since latter one of the worst performing in the Country?</p> <p>How will Senacre pupils access Oldborough site?</p>	<p>Senacre site not large enough to provide all the facilities sought.</p> <p>Police have been involved in walking the routes from Senacre areas to Oldborough. 80% of students currently walk or cycle to both schools and both schools draw from common areas. The pedestrian route through Mangravet would remain open.</p>
<p>CORNWALLIS PARENT/PARENT GROUP REPRESENTATIVE:</p> <p>Which interested parties were sent the consultation document? Were local primary schools included as those pupils would be the most likely to benefit from rebuilds? Insufficient time has been given through the consultation timescale to obtain information under the Freedom of Information Act.</p>	<p>Standard process for consultation been used. All parents, staff, Governors of Federation schools been sent copy of the consultation document – parents sent via post not via student. Headteachers of all feeder primary schools, secondary schools in Maidstone, MPs, Local Councillors, Parish Councillors also sent a copy.</p> <p>If a slightly late response arrives raising a substantial point this would not be excluded.</p> <p>Consultation period in two halves; first stage began 26 January which is informal process to determine whether to proceed or not. Full consultation process ends 31 May. First stage only five weeks rather than usual six as DfES made decision too late to allow</p>

<p>Current Federation has failed to live up to expectations so why change one Federation to another?</p> <p>What would be the parent body representation on a new Governing Body? Guidelines indicate only one Parent Governor.</p>	<p>this. After the five weeks decision made as to whether to continue to next stage of formal consultation of six weeks commencing 19 April. If anyone makes an objection at this stage the Schools Adjudicator may become involved and this could lengthen the process and lead to further consultation. Objections from all the consultation processes would be included.</p> <p>Difficult to recruit staff to challenging schools but staff could be attracted to schools with state of the art facilities involved with successful schools.</p> <p>Nothing would be established without parental involvement. Both the Local Authority and the schools would encourage parents. Whilst the Governing Body of an Academy is not required to have a large number of Parent Governors the Local Authority, as sponsors, would encourage parental involvement.</p>
<p>CORNWALLIS PARENT/CHAIRMAN OF BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA PARISH COUNCIL/GOVERNOR BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA PRIMARY SCHOOL:</p> <p>Had been pro Federation when concept first appeared as it allowed Cornwallis to provide support to Oldborough and Senacre. However, conversations with parents, Headteacher at Boughton CPS, staff at Cornwallis have indicated there has been a deterioration in standards at Cornwallis because the senior management have been spread too widely across the three schools and the Governing Body no longer focus on individual schools. Would like Cornwallis to revert to being a separate school with its own Governing Body. Buildings do not create the ethos of a school nor affect the teaching and learning</p>	<p>A Federation has to have one governing body. Believe staff at Cornwallis to be fully committed to the Federation and its aims of maintaining and raising standards. Cornwallis was built for a smaller school roll and did not provide for sixth form. Whilst buildings do not make a school the pupils' environment can be enhanced by new buildings and new facilities. If Cornwallis were not part of the Federation we would not be able to carry out the proposed improvements to Cornwallis. The number of pupils going to HE has increased over the years and results have not deteriorated.</p> <p>The Federation could be disbanded if the Governing Body chose that way</p>

process – it is the staff and the culture adopted and followed by management that make a school.	forward.
<p>FUTURE SENACRE PARENT:</p> <p>Where will pupils go in September? If we have chosen Senacre we do not want children to go to Oldborough and have to walk through Mangravet in the dark.</p>	<p>In September pupils will go to the school where they have been placed – Oldborough or Senacre. If the proposal goes ahead then towards the end of 2008 Senacre pupils will move across to Oldborough site. The two schools will continue independently within one Academy.</p> <p>Small schools by themselves are not viable but two ‘mini’ schools within one Academy would be. Some resources will be shared but independence of the two schools would remain.</p> <p>There has been no evidence following research that Senacre students are likely to be beaten up en route to Oldborough. CCTV is in operation.</p>
<p>SENACRE PARENT:</p> <p>Why are no meetings being held at Senacre since this is the school that is scheduled to be closed?</p>	<p>Decision made to hold both meetings at Cornwallis as believed to have larger accommodation. <i>(This was strongly disputed by a number of people)</i></p>
<p>CORNWALLIS PARENT:</p> <p>How will Special Needs pupils be included in the Academy programme as Cornwallis have failed my son?</p>	<p>There is a specialist VI Unit at Cornwallis and a Physical Disability unit at Senacre. These would continue within the rebuild programme. Schools will continue to work with SEN students.</p> <p>Local Authority committed to providing for such students and does more than many other Authorities in offering such provision.</p>
<p>CORNWALLIS PARENT:</p> <p>What are the strings attached to the £60m provided by the Government?</p> <p>There is no such thing as a ‘free lunch’ so what do the sponsors</p>	<p>Government wishes to raise academic standards and encourage businesses to be more involved in the social framework.</p> <p>There can be no corporate deals and companies cannot expect to gain</p>

<p>expect in return for their investment?</p> <p>Achievements relate to staff not buildings so why not spend the £60m on staff?</p>	<p>orders just because they are sponsors. Companies are keen to raise their corporate profile. Sponsorship will provide the schools with an extra source of income. This is better than BSF.</p> <p>Government provide the money for capital not revenue purposes.</p>
<p>SENACRE PARENT:</p> <p>How will the teaching change? What will the ratio of staff to students be?</p> <p>How will students interact in the shared spaces?</p>	<p>Ratio will continue at 1:30 even in the larger newly created learning spaces. Wanting more flexibility.</p> <p>Covered area between the two schools where staff and students can go.</p>
<p>CORNWALLIS PARENT:</p> <p>When there is a takeover that company moves their own people in. How will all this affect staff at the three schools and what influence will the sponsors have on the running of the schools?</p>	<p>At present sponsors are KCC, Hewlett Packard and Carillion. Have been very careful in choice of sponsors. Tried to avoid scenarios where there is one maverick individual who may try to take things over. We are more interested in corporate sponsorship.</p> <p>All three schools are currently Foundation schools and staff are employed by the Governing Body not the Local Authority. The new Governing Body will include representatives from the sponsoring organisations. The Local Authority will have a greater involvement in the Academy than it currently has with the Federation schools.</p>

Noted that the telephone number mentioned on Page 4 was incorrect.

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

**Proposed Closure of the South Maidstone Federation of Schools:
New Line Learning Cornwallis, Oldborough Manor and Senacre
and their replacement with two Academies**

**Summary of the public meeting held on
22 February 2007 at 7.00 pm
NLL Cornwallis School, Hubbards Lane, Linton, Maidstone, ME17 4HX**

Attended by:

Mrs. Valerie Dagger, KCC Member for Malling West (Chair)
Dr. Ian Craig, Director of Operations, KCC
Dr. Chris Gerry, Executive Headteacher, New Line Learning
Mr. Ray Harris, Chair of Governors
Mr. Chris Jones, Area Education Officer, Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling
Members of the Public and school representatives

Issue or Comment	Response
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>I am worried about how you are going to change the way that students are going to be taught. Are they going to be taught in classrooms or in a large hall divided into sections with teachers running between sections?</p> <p>I believe plans are already drawn up and we would like to know how they are going to be taught.</p>	<p>No final plans have been drawn up. We are currently in the consultation period which runs from 26 January – 31 May. A meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board is likely to be held on 15 March when the committee will be asked their views on progressing to the next stage of the formal consultation i.e. public notices in the local press and posted on the gates of the three schools. A six weeks' formal consultation period will take place between 19 April and 31 May 2007.</p> <p>If there are objections during this formal consultation, then the matter may end up being referred to an independent Adjudicator based in Darlington.</p> <p>We need to address the issues of why children do not want to come to school, and offer a style of education that will encourage them not to truant.</p> <p>The Oldbrough site has a new Learning Plaza, and we are working with children in the Plaza to design different spaces and different curriculum needs. Children need a space of their own. It is a project that will be running for six months to see if project based learning is the way forward.</p>

	<p>New secondary schools provide flexible spaces to allow teachers to teach groups of 30 students or larger groups and at the same time smaller groups.</p>
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>1. Dr Gerry mentioned two “mini” schools on the Oldborough site, but this is not mentioned in the consultation document.</p> <p>2. The consultation document is very thin because it is really about “do we want to move forward?” Will more details be available?</p> <p>3. Will there be an expectation of higher levels of standards across the Academies, as well as looking at the top end of the ability range?</p>	<p>Mini schools: Previously we were looking at how to fund the project ourselves without DfES funding. To offer a broad curriculum we need 900 students. We need to retain the identities of Oldborough/Senacre, and, at the same time, allow them to give choice to parents and students for curriculum offer. The Academy specialism will be Business and Enterprise, but within that sporting skills/vocational skills.</p> <p>A small school is a secure environment which would support those students at Oldborough/Senacre with learning difficulties more effectively.</p> <p>Details: We will not have any further details until the DfES releases the money and we can draw up plans.</p> <p>Raising expectations: We would like to offer an advanced curriculum with more interesting options. At Key Stage 3 we will offer Business Enterprise with flexibility in the curriculum, and at Key Stages 4 and 5 GCSE and “A” levels.</p> <p>We are currently putting systems in place to look in more detail at individual results, and how students can be advanced along the educational track.</p> <p>The size of the sixth form will increase, and it is important that we produce a broad curriculum to cater for their needs to enable them to get the best results.</p>
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>If the money is coming from DfES, why can it not be used to improve Oldborough and Senacre, at the same time as Cornwallis? Do we have to move Senacre?</p>	<p>If we were not looking at an Academy proposal, we would need to close either Senacre or Oldborough. We have secondary schools which are too small in the South Maidstone area, and this will worsen as the lower numbers of students in primary schools move through. We have surplus spaces in</p>

	<p>secondary schools throughout Kent, and even the new housing will not keep up with the falling rolls in the schools.</p> <p>Already we have only sufficient students on the Oldborough/Senacre for one school. If we were to re-build we would not want to build for less than 900 students. If we have below 600 students, it is difficult to offer the whole range of courses.</p> <p>There is the potential to sell off some of the land to reinvest in Oldborough/Senacre.</p> <p>Academy status would be a wonderful opportunity to access £60m, of which at least $\frac{2}{3}$ would come from central government. If we say no to Academy status then we would have to wait until 2018 to access funds from the Building Schools for the Future programme for a rebuild, and by that time either Senacre or Oldborough will have closed.</p> <p>This is a joint proposal i.e. between the Local Authority and the Governing Body of the Federation.</p>
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>Will the admissions form be an independent form in the future?</p> <p>Why are you doing 8½ forms on entry?</p> <p>If the sponsors have greater freedom over the length of the school day and holiday dates, I think this should be thought through carefully, especially for parents who have children at different schools.</p> <p>What happens when sponsorship declines? How long are they locked into sponsorship?</p> <p>Ofsted. As an academy, would you still be monitored by Ofsted?</p> <p>National Curriculum. Will this form part of the curriculum?</p>	<p>Admissions form. Parents will need to apply to either the new Cornwallis Academy or the Oldborough/Senacre Academy. The admissions procedures will be fairer and will abide by the national code.</p> <p>8½ forms of entry. This will be adjusted to a whole number.</p> <p>Sponsorship. Sponsorship of £2m can be paid over a five year period if necessary under terms to be agreed by the Governing Body, and any interest accrued would go into the schools' budget.</p> <p>Ofsted. Yes, would still receive Ofsted visits, but not for the first five terms of setting up the Academies.</p> <p>National Curriculum. No, but we would not move away from GCSE and "A" Level courses. Academy status would allow us much greater flexibility at KS3.</p>

	<p>Length of school day and holidays: The Local Authority will be one of the sponsors and will have the right to a seat on the Governing Body. There will be a greater accountability through this route for such issues as length of school day and holidays.</p>
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>If a parent applies to Cornwallis for a place, would they alternatively be put over to the Oldborough site if there are no places available?</p>	<p>No. An Academy can set out its admissions criteria, but it would need to adhere to the Admissions Code of Practice. Academies cannot select children by ability. Standard oversubscriptions criteria are set by the schools.</p>
<p>LOCAL RESIDENT:</p> <p>In the 1960s, Oldborough had an excellent reputation in the community. Why not apply the money available to restore that reputation?</p>	<p>One answer could be that times have changed dramatically and no school has the same catchment area. Some schools become oversubscribed and some undersubscribed, and they have to take any additional children that come into the area irrespective of where they live. There are spirals and declines through no fault of the schools, and there is never a simple answer as to why the popularity of schools change overnight.</p> <p>Over the next few years, comparatively deprived communities will be given excellent education facilities. At the moment it is very difficult to recruit staff. Some of the most needy people in this town deserve a decent chance in life. The DfES, under the Academies' banner, want to make this happen.</p>
<p>BOROUGH/COUNTY COUNCILLOR:</p> <p>The possibility of two Academies gives an opportunity for regeneration in this area of Maidstone. If Oldborough remains on the site there is an opportunity within the Council's budgets to fund safer ways for students to get to school, including safer routes to walk to school. By 2010 it is hoped that there could be free school buses for 11-16 year olds, and trials have already taken place elsewhere in the County. I think this would be a major help.</p> <p>Since becoming a County Councillor, I often have to attend appeals meetings on behalf of</p>	

<p>parents, and they will not even consider Oldborough as an option. I personally hope that what is planned, on the Oldborough site, will encourage more parents to have a pride at looking at Oldborough.</p> <p>Maidstone Borough Council is a watchdog. Their Planning Department have a big role to play in what is planned for the site, and hopefully any concerns will be overcome, as Maidstone Borough Council want to support this project.</p>	
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>What will happen to the students at Cornwallis whilst the new buildings are being built?</p>	<p>Carry on with business as usual. Our ambition is to build a new school at the top end of the site with minimal disruption in terms of what is in place. Governors are concerned that standards should not fall whilst the new building work is in progress.</p> <p>If the new build does happen we will maintain standards and teachers. A new build always attracts good quality teachers as they want to do their job to the best of their ability, and our new facilities will allow them to do what they came into teaching to do.</p>
<p>LOCAL RESIDENT:</p> <p>If Senacre does move over to Oldborough, will this further isolate Senacre and the students it serves?</p>	<p>In the Maidstone Core Strategy, one particular educational objective is to raise qualifications for children leaving schools, for young people to achieve further and higher qualifications and to raise the numbers that gain good employment. In order to do that we need to provide a range of facilities. The Senacre site is not large enough to offer the school with the vocational site. Oldborough is the only site to take to take the size of school to provide the major opportunities that we want to offer to children in this area.</p>
<p>LOCAL RESIDENT:</p> <p>If Senacre school is going on the Oldborough site, will the amount of traffic increase until the free bus service is sorted out?</p> <p>Our house backs on to Pheasant Lane and we are often bothered by children during lunchtime. There is nowhere for the children to go and they are often hanging about. If children are being transferred from one</p>	<p>Traffic: The Oldborough school was built to house in the region of 2,000 pupils. At the moment there are under 400 young people. Even with the two schools on that site, it will still only be approximately half the size of the school that used to operate there. This provides the context of why we need to consider traffic we are likely to generate. A lot of work has gone into finding out from</p>

<p>school to the other will this increase the amount of anti-social behaviour?</p>	<p>children the routes they might use. There is no distinction between the Senacre and Oldborough catchment areas. Our surveys show that children going to Oldborough either walk to school, cycle or use the bus for part of their journey and not cars and, therefore, we anticipate that there will not be a huge increase in car transport. One of the things we have to do in setting up the new Academy is to comply with planning regulations, which is part of why we want to look at transport and travel arrangements. During the feasibility stage we will look at how pupils' comings and goings can be managed.</p> <p>The school will want to work with local residents on the issue of students' anti-social behaviour. Part of the objective in designing the new building is to incorporate facilities that mean children want to stay in school at lunchtimes, and the development of the Academy will help to alleviate these problems.</p> <p>We cannot know who is going in and out of the schools during lunchtimes, and we need to commit, therefore, to having engaging facilities in school during this time. We hope it will be possible to design an eating area to accommodate all pupils.</p>
<p>NUT REPRESENTATIVE:</p> <p>What engagement and interest will the sponsors have in education?</p> <p>University research that suggests that Academies do not favour SEN students.</p> <p>When will teachers be consulted over what is going to happen?</p>	<p>The current interested sponsors include Hewlett Packard, Corrillian and KCC. As sponsors they will have a corporate interest and not a day to day influence. This does not mean that we have to buy their products, and there is an open process for purchasing which is monitored by our auditors.</p> <p>Modern Academies serve some of the most deprived communities in the Country.</p> <p>As soon as we know something in terms of feasibility we will talk with teachers. We want to improve teachers' terms and conditions and enhance their training.</p> <p>Quoted statistics on how the Ramsgate School had improved since becoming the Marlowe Academy.</p>

	<p>Sponsors: This could be the same for governors. They are essential to the running of education, and people from industry and commerce get involved in the running of schools. The teachers and the Governing Body of these schools have been consulted and they are supportive.</p> <p>SEN: As Academies we would have to follow the School Admissions Code, and this will include students with SEN.</p>
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>Will there be a gradual move for teachers and students from Senacre to Oldborough and will this affect jobs?</p>	<p>If the move goes ahead, we are saying that in some time in 2008 we would move all of Senacre students to the Oldborough site. The facilities at Oldborough have to be prepared and all issues relating to SEN students need to be addressed. The children will be consulted and prepared for life in the new building when it is eventually built.</p> <p>Jobs at Senacre and Oldborough: If you merge two schools together there will be change in terms of administrative posts. However, in terms of teaching staff, we see this as an opportunity to attract more qualified teachers into the Academies.</p>
<p>PARENT:</p> <p>Students from Oldborough and Senacre will have different loyalties to their own schools. If you mix students will you have difficulties?</p> <p>Do you agree that standards will fall if students do not learn the basic skills?</p> <p>Is there a danger that if you put lower ability children into a vocational course at a very early age that this will affect them in later life, as they will not have the basic skills to allow them to take a career change?</p>	<p>Children across the Federation are taught together on vocational courses and we do not have any trouble, and they are very optimistic about this move. They are wearing the same uniform and you cannot tell which of the three schools they come from.</p> <p>Standards: I agree that children need to be taught the basic skills, but they also need to use electrical equipment when appropriate, and this means it has to be available. Some people are struggling in terms of change and what we teach the younger generation.</p> <p>Vocational Courses: Vocational education is for all not just a few, and it gives children an experience of the worth of work.</p>