



## AGENDA

### SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, 21st May, 2009, at 10.30 am

Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen  
Manning**

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County  
Hall, Maidstone**

Telephone **(01622)  
694289/694367**

*Tea/Coffee will be available from 10.15am outside the meeting room*

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes - 23 April 2009 (Pages 1 - 2)
4. Proposed Closure of the Bradbourne (Foundation) School for Girls and the Wildernesse (Foundation) School for Boys, Sevenoaks, to replace with an Academy (Pages 3 - 30)

#### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Peter Sass  
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership  
(01622) 694002

**Wednesday, 13 May 2009**

*Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.*

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**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL****SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD**

MINUTES of a meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 23 April 2009, commencing at 10:30 am.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mrs C Angell, Mr C J Capon, Mr A D Crowther, Mr M J Northey, Mr A R Poole and Mr M J Vye

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance, Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Adams (Area Children's Services Officer, Ashford & Shepway) and Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager (Executive))

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS****1. Minutes - 12 March 2009**

*(Item 3)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2009 be agreed as a true record.

**2. Fleetdown Infant & Nursery and Fleetdown Junior Schools, Dartford - Proposed Amalgamation**

*(Item 4 – report by Mr Grahame Ward, Director, Operations)*

*(Mr David Hart, Operations Support Officer was present for this item)*

(1) This report provided the results of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Fleetdown Infant School and Fleetdown Junior School, Dartford. The report also provided details of the Secretary of States decision on the Council's application to publish proposals for a new school, without running a competition as provided for in Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

(2) In the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of issues to which officers responded. On the question of capital funding Mr Adams said that although it had not been possible to include this proposal in the current capital programme none the less all best efforts would be made to secure the necessary funding. The proposed amalgamation would be eligible for support from the reorganisation fund and also some funding may be available from the Primary Capital Programme. Officers from the Capital Strategy Unit would be meeting with the new headteacher and the interim governing body in order to better understand the schools priorities.

(3) Mr Adams also said that it would be the responsibility of the interim governing body to determine the staffing structure but that staff of both schools would transfer into the new school, with an alignment of posts once the new school had been established. Mr Adams said that Paragraph 6 of the report should be amended as it

was not the case that the two current deputy headteachers would be retiring. He also placed on record an apology that in recording the fact that a minute's silence was held at the public meeting held on the 11 February 2009 in memory of the teacher from the Junior School who had died tragically in a motor accident, the name of that teacher Mrs Barbara Du Preez had not been recorded in the notes of the public meeting.

(4) Following further consideration of this matter the Advisory Board agreed to the issuing of a Public Notice for the amalgamation of Fleetdown Infant & Nursery and Fleetdown Junior Schools, Dartford.

### **3. Proposed Closure of Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School and its replacement as a Primary School within the Folkestone Academy**

*(Item 5 – report by Mr Graham Ward, Director, Operations)*

(1) This report presented the results of a public consultation on the proposal to close Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School and replace it with a Primary phase within the Folkestone Academy. Mr Adams outlined the key issues arising from the public meeting and consultation exercise and said that officers would be working closely with the two governing bodies on the ongoing development of this proposal.

(2) In response to a range of questions raised by Members Mr Adams said that the Park Farm Primary School buildings would be replaced by a new provision located on the same site but separate to the Folkestone Academy. However whilst the Primary and Secondary elements of the school would be discrete, with separate identities, opportunities would exist for expectations and structures to be common throughout, thereby supporting transition through the phases. It was also confirmed that the Academy would adhere to the Code of Practice on Admissions and would be expected to play a role within the Local School Partnerships. With regard to staff, Mr Adams said that the Governing Body was the employer of the staff at Park Farm School and that the Folkestone Academy Trust was the employer of staff within the Academy. Consultation with Park Farm staff had been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of TUPE and discussions were ongoing with the DCSF regarding funding for TUPE costs and the funding for any necessary redundancies.

(3) With regard to SEN provision Mr Adams said that Park Farm already had a good record of supporting SEN pupils and it was considered that the all-age Academy would be able to place additional resources into SEN at the Primary level. Further it was considered the proposal would lead to the better development of existing working practices and in partnership with other agencies provide additional support. In response to a question about whether Members should have a report on how successful other all-through Academies had been before reaching a decision on this proposal, Mr Adams said that a study of other Academies offering all-through provision could be undertaken but that consideration of this proposal could not reasonably be deferred until the outcome of that review was known.

(4) Following further consideration of the proposals the Advisory Board agreed with one abstention that a Public Notice should be issued for the closure of Park Farm (Foundation) Primary School, subject to its replacement within the Folkestone Academy.

By: Grahame Ward, Director – Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 21 May 2009

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE BRADBOURNE [FOUNDATION] SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND THE WILDERNESSE [FOUNDATION] SCHOOL FOR BOYS, SEVENOAKS, TO REPLACE WITH AN ACADEMY

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary:

- (1) This report presents the results of a public consultation exercise undertaken regarding the proposed closure of The Bradbourne School and The Wildernesse School, Sevenoaks and their replacement with an Academy on 1 September 2010.
- (2) It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a Public Notice to close the schools, to make way for an Academy.

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**This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to School Organisation Advisory Board of 8 January 2009.**

## **Introduction**

1. (1) The School Organisation Advisory Board, at its meeting on 8 January 2009, supported a recommendation to consult on the proposal to close The Bradbourne and The Wildernesse Schools, in Sevenoaks, in order that they may be replaced with a government funded Academy.

(2) This report sets out the results of the public consultation exercise that took place between 27 March and 15 May 2009.

## **Background**

2. (1) The Bradbourne School for Girls and the Wildernesse School for Boys are both non-selective (Foundation) high schools located in Sevenoaks, approximately one mile apart. Location maps, site plans and student distribution maps are included as appendices 1, 2 and 3.

2. (2)] The proposed closure of the two schools and replacement with a government funded Academy has been the subject of delay due to necessary Ministerial approval, expected in November 2008, not being received until late January 2009: too late to facilitate a September 2009 opening. It is, therefore, now proposed that the two schools

should close on 31 August 2010, with an Academy opening, initially, in current buildings, on 1 September 2010.

## **Academy Proposal**

3. (1) The proposal is that the predecessor schools would close on 31 August 2010, with an Academy opening in their place. It is proposed that the Academy would open in September 2010 in existing buildings but with the main base being on the Bradbourne site, and that it would move into new 'state of the art' buildings, on the Wildernessee site, from September 2012

(2) The Academy would be an 11-18 school for boys and girls of all aptitudes and abilities exploring the provision of single sex teaching in core subjects within a mixed environment. It would admit up to 240 students in each year group, with 350 places available in the sixth form. This means that the total roll might be 1,550 by 2012. All current students of the two schools would be eligible for automatic transfer to the Academy

(3) The Academy would specialise in Languages (with a focus on communication skills and on English as a first language) and the Expressive Arts. It would be a high performing institution, with a strong community focus that would provide an outstanding education for all students. It would draw upon the considerable experience and expertise of the sponsors and would build on the strengths of the predecessor schools.

(4) Lead Sponsor for the Academy is Gordon Phillips, Chairman of the Glen Care Group. Co-sponsors are Sevenoaks School and Kent County Council (KCC). Details of the respective contributions and roles of the sponsors are included in the previous paper to SOAB.

## **The Consultation**

4. (1) Due to delay in receipt of the necessary Ministerial approval to move to a feasibility stage of this Academy proposal, the public consultation exercise on closure of the two predecessor schools could not commence in line with the SOAB Report of 8 January timeline. The consultation period, in fact, began on 27 March 2009 and ended on 15 May 2009.

(2) A Public Consultation Document, attached as Appendix 4, was widely distributed. 'Hard copies' of the document were provided for all parents/carers, students, staff and governors of The Bradbourne and Wildernessee Schools. In addition, all schools in the West Kent Local Children's Services Partnerships and secondary schools in The West Kent Learning Federation received copies of the document. Copies also went to the Local Member, all West Kent Members, other County Councillors, the Local Member of Parliament, Sevenoaks District Council, the Sevenoaks Local Strategic Partnership, the Learning and Skills Council, the Dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury, the Archdiocese of Southwark, neighbouring Local Authorities, all Sevenoaks District Parish Councils and local libraries.

(3) Approximately 2,000 copies of the Public Consultation Document were circulated and it was also made available on the Kent County Council website, with an opportunity to respond electronically, as well as via the reply form included at the back of the document.

(4) A public meeting was held at the neutral venue of Sevenoaks Primary School, on 28 April 2009. Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chairman of SOAB and Member for Malling West, chaired the meeting. The panel comprised Ms Chris Lay, Area Children's Services Officer, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells, and Mr David Adams, Principal Officer, Operations/Area Children's Services Officer, Ashford and Shepway. In attendance was Mr Nick Chard, Local Member, together with representatives from the sponsors and from Appleyards, the Project management consultants for the Academy.

(5) 185 people registered their attendance but in excess of 200 were present.

## **Responses to the Public Consultation**

### *Written Responses*

5. (1) This proposal has been the subject of lively debate locally generating a number of articles in the press. As expected the proposal has prompted a notable response, particularly from parents/carers of students of the two schools.

(2) As of 6 May 2009, 95 written responses had been received, of which 29 were in favour, 55 opposed and 11 were undecided or did not state a view. Appendix 5 summarises the points raised.

(3) As the closing date for responses is after the print deadline for SOAB, an updated version of Appendix 5 will be circulated at the meeting.

### *Public Meeting Responses*

(5) A summary of the main issues raised and the responses given at the public meeting, held on 28 April 2009, at Sevenoaks Primary School, is attached as Appendix 6.

## **Views of Local Member**

6. The Local Member, Nick Chard strongly supports the necessary closure of The Bradbourne and The Wildernesse Schools in order for Sevenoaks, as a whole, to benefit from all that a purpose built Academy can bring to the town and surrounding area. He views this Academy proposal as a 'one off' opportunity to establish a high quality school of choice for young people of all aptitudes and abilities in Sevenoaks, to provide a resource for the community and to encourage social cohesion across the town. He understands the concerns of some parents around the issues of single sex and co-educational education and is confident that these concerns will be addressed during the range of consultation meetings, with stakeholders, to come.

## **Views of Local Member of Parliament**

7. The views of Michael Fallon MP have not yet been received but are expected before the close of this consultation and will be reported at the meeting.

### **Views of Sevenoaks District Council**

8. Sevenoaks District Council has indicated that it will not be providing a formal view on this proposal.

### **Views of the Town Council**

9. Sevenoaks Town Council will be discussing this matter at its meeting on 11 May 2009 and the Town Council's view will be reported at the SOAB meeting.

### **Views of the Diocesan Authorities**

10. No views have yet been received from the Diocesan Authorities.

### **Views of the Learning and Skills Council**

11. The views of the Learning and Skills Council have not yet been received.

### **Views of the Governing Bodies**

12. Detailed views have yet to be received but both Governing Bodies submitted letters of support 'in principle' for the establishment of an Academy when the Expression of Interest was submitted for Ministerial approval.

### **Views of the Students**

13. As at 6 May 2009, four replies have been received from students of the Bradbourne School all of which are against the proposal. Amongst the issues they raise are: loss of single sex education, potential for disruption and poor behaviour in a co-educational school, good access to the Bradbourne site in contrast to traffic problems at the Wildernesse site, the recent 'Good' Ofsted judgement and success of the Bradbourne being diluted and the popularity of the school with many students travelling from far afield.

### **Views of the Partnership Board**

14. Sevenoaks South Local Children's Services Partnership will be discussing this matter at their next Board Meeting on 12 May 2009 and partners views will be reported at the SOAB meeting.

### **Views of the Area Children's Services Officer**

15. (1) The Area Children's Services Officer is excited by the potential for this proposal to transform what is currently available at secondary level in the area and for it to establish an excellent school of choice for the young people of Sevenoaks, in Sevenoaks.

(2) Her views will be expanded following the close of public consultation on 15 May and circulated ahead of the meeting.



## Proposed Timetable

16. Should the Cabinet Member following SOAB's recommendation agree this proposal, the following timetable is envisaged: -

12 June 2009	Public Notice issued
24 July 2009	End of Statutory Notice period
End August 2009	Final Decision made (subject to any referral to Adjudication)
31 August 2010	The Bradbourne and Wildernesse Schools close
1 September 2010	The Academy opens

## Recommendation

17. The School Organisation Advisory Board is requested to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Operations, Skills and Resources that a Public Notice be issued to close the Bradbourne School (Foundation) for Girls and Wildernesse School (Foundation) for Boys on 31 August 2010 in order that they be replaced with a government funded Academy, to open on 1 September 2010.

Chris Lay (Ms)  
Area Children's Services Officer  
Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells  
01732 525087

The Local Member is Mr Nick Chard

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*Background Documents:*  
None

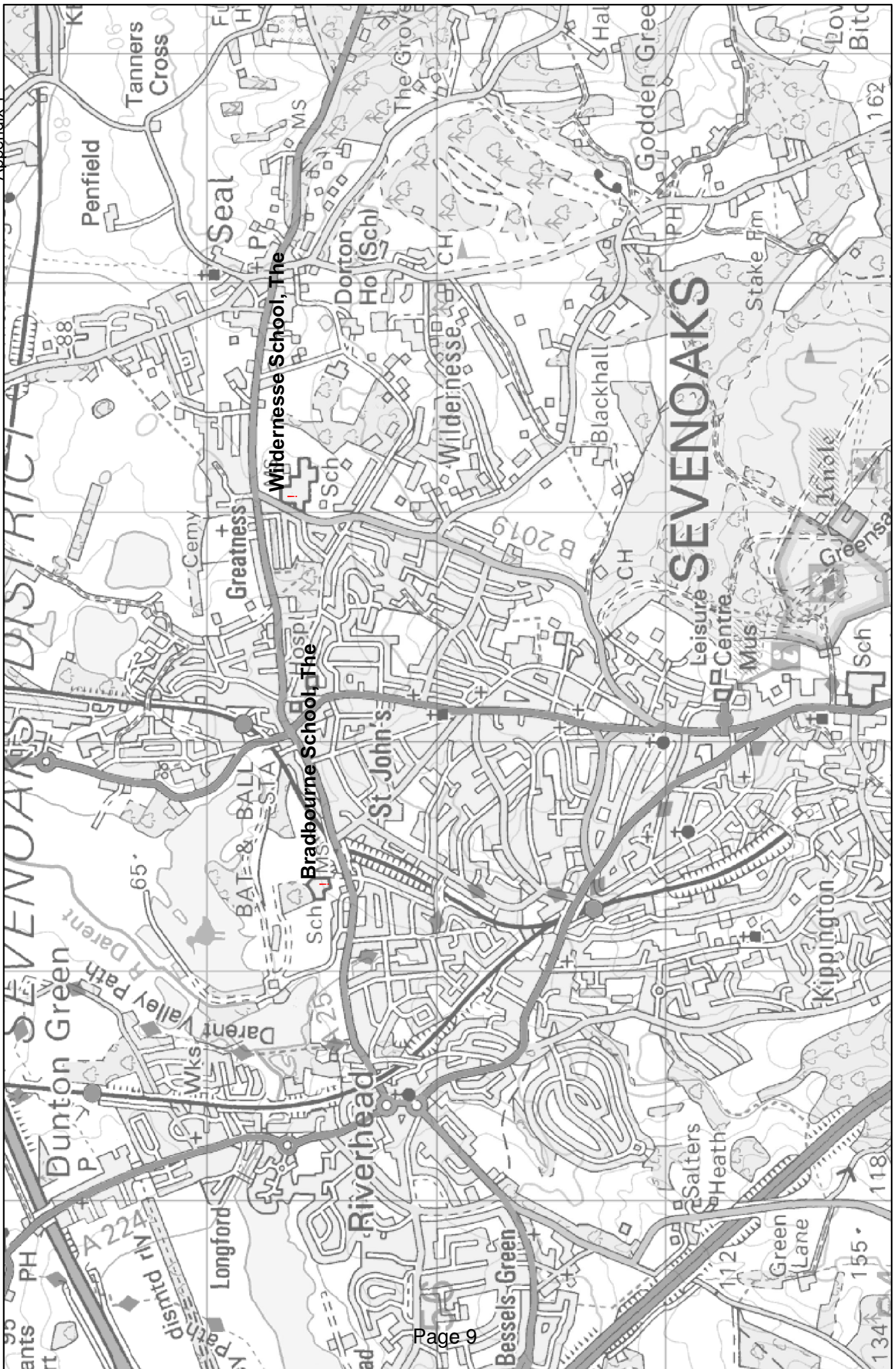
*Previous Committee Reports:*

*School Organisation Advisory Board - 8 January 2009*

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# Location of Bradbourne and Wildernesse secondary schools, Sevenoaks

Appendix 1



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# Site map of Bradbourne School, Sevenoaks

Appendix 2

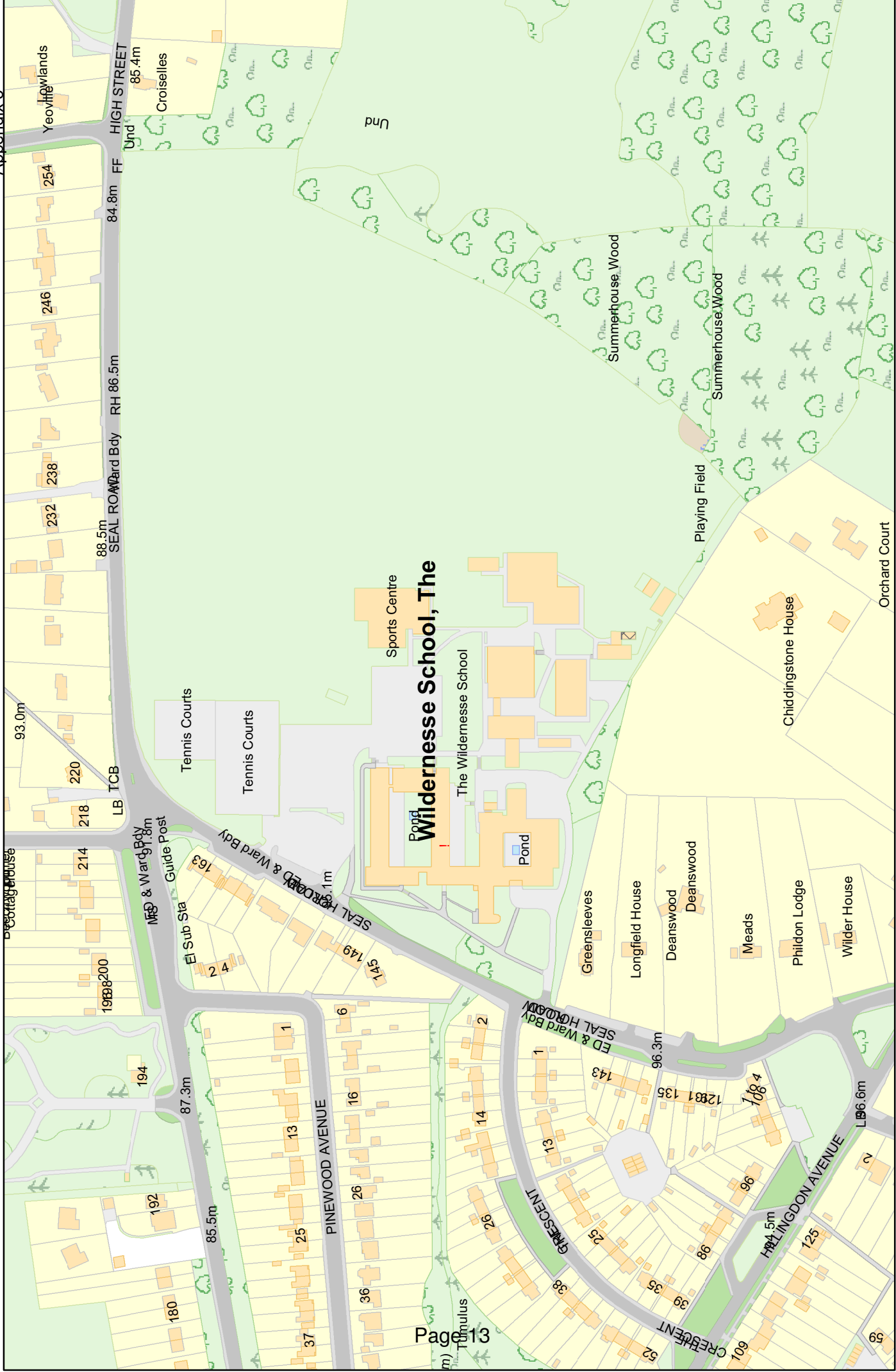


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# Site map of Wildernesse School, Sevenoaks

Appendix 3



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## Public Consultation

### **Proposal to close The Bradbourne School and The Wildernesse School, and to replace with an Academy**



Kent County Council would like to hear your views on this proposal.



Children, Families & Education Directorate



Kent County Council (KCC) is considering a proposal to close The Bradbourne (Foundation) School and The Wildernesse (Foundation) School, Sevenoaks, in order to open a new Government funded Academy. We want to know what you think about it.

This document introduces the proposal and invites you to a Public Meeting to share your thoughts and to ask questions. It is written mainly for parents/carers, governors, staff, students and other people who have an interest in education and services for young people and the community in the Sevenoaks area.

There are two strands to this consultation process. This one, led by the County Council, is about the need to close the Bradbourne and Wildernesse schools in order to make way for an Academy. The second strand, led by Project Management Consultants on behalf of the sponsors and appointed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), is a separate but linked consultation about the opening of an Academy.

This is because academies are state funded schools but independent of the County Council and so consultation about them must be led independently. We work very closely with the Project Management Consultants, however, and attend each others' consultation activities. Appleyards, a local Sevenoaks based consultancy, has been appointed to lead the Academy project in Sevenoaks and will be present at the Public Meeting publicised in this document.

Please note that there is a Reply Form at the back of this document for you to return your comments if you would like to. No decisions will be made until this consultation process is completed and your views will inform the outcome.

## **The Bradbourne School**

The Bradbourne School is a well subscribed, all-ability, high school for girls aged 11-18, with a current roll of 841, against a net capacity of 858. It is located in Bradbourne Vale Road, off the A25, and serves a wide community in Sevenoaks, as well as drawing students from across West and North West Kent and from across county borders.

The proportion of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and being eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is broadly in line with county and national averages. In 2008, 60.5% of students gained 5 or more GCSEs, with 46.3% achieving this benchmark when including English and Maths.

The school enjoys specialist status in the Visual Arts and a recent Ofsted inspection found it to be Good overall, and Outstanding in its specialist area.

## **The Wildernesse School**

The Wildernesse School is an all-ability, high school for boys aged 11-18, with a current roll of 511, against a net capacity of 812. It is located off Seal Hollow Road to the north-east of the town centre and is approximately one mile from The Bradbourne School. The two schools have a joint sixth form. As with The Bradbourne School, most of its students live locally but a smaller proportion come from further afield.

Numbers of students with SEN are almost double the Kent average at 41.3% (2008 Student Census). In 2008, 46% of students gained 5 or more GCSEs, with only 31.7% achieving this benchmark when including English and Maths. Whilst this represents an improvement on previous years' results, the school continues to be included in the DCSF 'National Challenge'.

## **What is an Academy?**

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that provide a first-class, free education to local students of all abilities. Each Academy is unique, able to provide local solutions for local needs, drawing on the expertise of sponsors to deliver a distinctive ethos. They have the flexibility to be creative in their curriculum, timetabling, organisation and governance arrangements. All offer a broad and balanced curriculum, consistent with national curriculum requirements and focus on one or more specialisms.

Successful Academies share specialist skills and facilities with other primary, secondary and special schools, together with the local community. In this way they play their part in the social cohesion of communities, providing a focus for learning and for raising aspiration.

They are all-ability schools established by sponsors from a range of backgrounds including business, further and higher education, independent schools, faith or voluntary groups, working in highly innovative partnerships with central Government, Local Authority and multi agency partners. The DCSF meets the running costs for Academies in full.

## **What does this proposal mean?**

The proposal is that The Bradbourne School and The Wildernesse School would be closed on 31 August 2010, with an Academy opening in their place on 1 September 2010, exploring the provision of single sex teaching in core subjects within a mixed environment. The Lead Sponsor for the Academy would be Gordon Phillips, Chairman of the Glen Care Group. Co-sponsors would be Sevenoaks Independent School and Kent County Council. Each sponsor has a distinctive contribution to make to the success of the Academy.

If, following public consultation, KCC Members and DCSF Ministers agree to proceed with a September 2010 opening, the Academy would open in existing accommodation, with current cohorts continuing to be taught as single sex cohorts, based in their current school accommodation, but benefitting from coherent strategic leadership and management across the two and also from the range of opportunities that would flow from this.

New 'state of the art' buildings would be expected to be completed for September 2012 and would be built on the current Wildernesse site, subject to full consultation procedures around planning permission.

The Academy would be an 11-18 school for boys and girls of all abilities and would admit up to 240 students in each year group, with 350 places available in the sixth form. This means that the total roll might be 1,550 by 2012. All current students of the two schools would automatically become students of the Academy.

The Academy would specialise in Languages (with a focus on English as a first language) and the Expressive Arts. It would be a high performing institution, with a strong community focus that would provide an outstanding education for students of all abilities. It would build upon the strengths of the existing schools, supported by its co-sponsor, Sevenoaks School. The opportunity for single sex teaching of some national curriculum subjects would be explored as a key feature of the Academy.



## **Why is this change being proposed and how will it improve education?**

The need for this Academy is simple – to provide a 21<sup>st</sup> century school that can deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum and learning environment for Sevenoaks' students in Sevenoaks.

Collectively, the sponsors are able to draw upon considerable skills and expertise in the fields of social care, school leadership and new learning technologies. The involvement of Sevenoaks School would bring considerable benefits to the Academy, making a significant impact on standards of teaching and learning. Many of the school's successful educational principles and practices might be modelled when developing the Academy's unique ethos and learning framework, necessary for meeting the needs of a broad range of learners' aptitudes and abilities from across the Sevenoaks community.

Currently the majority of students from Sevenoaks town and its surrounding villages travel out of the area to go to school. A key objective for the Academy would be to retain local students who might otherwise attend other Kent or out-of-county schools. It would work within the West Kent Learning Federation of secondary schools to complement existing specialist choices available.

The Academy would operate at the heart of its local community, providing a hub for services to young people and their families, within the context of Children's Trust arrangements in Kent. These would include programmes of sporting, cultural and family activities, as well as life-long learning opportunities, aimed at life enrichment and social cohesion across Sevenoaks town and the surrounding area.

## An Academy in Sevenoaks

Sponsors intend the Academy to provide a first class education, establishing it as the school of choice for local students of all aptitudes and abilities. The Academy would expect to attract a larger critical mass of able teachers and so provide a broader, richer curriculum than is currently possible across the existing schools.

The dual specialisms of Languages and the Expressive Arts are proposed after careful consideration of the possible options. Sponsors are determined to focus on improving literacy within the Languages specialism, so providing access to an enhanced curriculum offer. The Academy would operate in partnership with local language-based and arts industries and practitioners to secure a learning experience that develops independence, curiosity, self-esteem, risk taking and responsibility. The focus on these specialisms would be set within a general curriculum which develops young people's confidence and life skills, recognising that strong literacy and numeracy skills are keys to success in life.

The Lead Sponsor, Gordon Phillips, has a keen interest in the emotional well being of young people and in the provision of intensive literacy support for those who have yet to gain that 'currency for life'. He recognises the potential for the academy programme to transform radically life chances for young people in the Sevenoaks area.

Co-Sponsor, Sevenoaks School, is a centre of academic excellence with a national and international reputation. Its creativity and innovation in teaching and learning and emphasis on co-curricular enrichment, its strong ethos and international dimension would all have a significant impact on the Academy.

## How much would it cost?

### Capital

The capital costs of the Academy would be borne by the DCSF. In the unlikely event that any parts of the existing sites were to be sold, then a contribution from the capital receipts would be required from KCC towards the capital costs.

### Revenue

The Academy would receive its revenue funding directly from the DCSF each year. It would be funded at a rate equivalent to other Kent specialist schools.

### Human

In these circumstances, legislation concerning transfer of staff (known as TUPE) is considered to apply and consultation will take place in accordance with these requirements.

### Transport and Road Safety Implications

Ensuring that students travel to the Academy using sustainable methods of transport is also at the heart of this proposal. With the increase in numbers envisaged as being on site over time, a school travel plan would be developed by the Academy. Students would be encouraged to take advantage of schemes such as the Kent Freedom Pass which is being introduced in Sevenoaks in June 2009. The Kent Freedom Pass provides unlimited bus travel to all Kent students in Years 7 to 11, for £50 per year.

This consultation document is also available at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations>

## CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

8 January 2009	Kent County Council's School Organisation Advisory Board meeting to consider a Public Consultation.
27 March 2009	Start of Consultation
28 April 2009	Public Meeting
15 May 2009	Close of Consultation
21 May 2009	School Organisation Advisory Board meeting to consider issuing a Public Notice, following Public Consultation
5 June 2009	Public Notice issued, if agreed by Cabinet Member
17 July 2009	End of Statutory Representation Period
End August 2009	Final Decision made
31 August 2010	Bradbourne and Wildernesse Schools close and an Academy opens
	1 September 2010

## What Happens Next?

- All the views received, either in writing, by email or at the Public Meeting, will be reported to the School Organisation Advisory Board of KCC on **21 May 2009 at County Hall, 10.30am. This is a Public Meeting, open to the public. Reports to it are available on request: Tel: 01622 694289 or 694297**
- IF** following a Cabinet Member decision, KCC determines to take the proposal forward, a Public Notice would be published in the local newspaper, at the schools, and in public places like the local library. The Public Notice would run for six weeks, during which time anyone could make a Statutory Objection or a Representation about the proposal.
- IF** no one objects, KCC can close the schools.
- IF** there are objections, the Schools' Adjudicator may be required to make a final decision.
- Concurrently**, there would be consultation on the Academy proposal itself, led by Appleyards, Project Management Consultants, appointed by the DCSF, on behalf of sponsors.
- NO** decisions will be made until your views are known.

## HOW TO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

### ▶ Complete and return the Reply Form

Send to:

Ms Chris Lay  
Area Children's Services Officer,  
(Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells)  
17 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent ME19 4UL  
Fax: 01732 525223  
(Your comments must reach us by Friday 15 May 2009)

### ▶ Come to a Public Meeting

At:

Sevenoaks Primary School  
Bradbourne Park Road  
Sevenoaks  
Kent TN13 3LB  
Tuesday 28 April 2009 at 7pm.

\* Parking will also be available at The Bradbourne School

An elected member of Kent County Council will chair this meeting. You will be able to ask questions and tell us what you think regarding the school closure process. Officers from the Local Authority and representatives from the sponsors will also be present to tell you more about the proposals to open an Academy.

### ▶ Email your comments to [school.consultations@kent.gov.uk](mailto:school.consultations@kent.gov.uk)

**(We will note all you say, but will not be able to respond individually to Reply Forms, letters or emails)**

Grahame Ward, Director of Resources  
Children, Families and Education, Kent County Council  
27 March 2009

## Public Consultation Reply Form

### Proposal to close The Bradbourne School and The Wildernesse School and to replace with an Academy

To: Ms Chris Lay  
Area Children's Services Officer, Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells  
17 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill, West Malling  
Kent, ME19 4UL  
Fax: 01732 525223

You can also email your views to: [school.consultations@kent.gov.uk](mailto:school.consultations@kent.gov.uk)

**PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN FRIDAY 15 MAY 2009**

#### Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes  No  Undecided

I am (please tick as appropriate)

The parent/carer of a student at Bradbourne/Wildernesse (please delete as appropriate)

A member of staff at Bradbourne/Wildernesse (please delete as appropriate)

A governor of Bradbourne/Wildernesse (please delete as appropriate)

A student at Bradbourne/Wildernesse (please delete as appropriate)

Other interested party

Name of other interested party:

Name:

Address:

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.

**PLEASE WRITE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OVERLEAF**

My comments are as follows

*Please continue on another sheet if necessary*

## Appendix 5

### PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE BRADBOURNE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND THE WILDERNESSE SCHOOL FOR BOYS, SEVENOAKS, TO REPLACE WITH AN ACADEMY Summary of Written Responses at Close of Consultation

	<b>Support Proposal</b>	<b>Against Proposal</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Parent / Carer</b>	27	82	6	115
<b>Student</b>	2	14	2	18
<b>Member of Staff</b>	5	2	1	8
<b>Governor at School</b>	3	2	0	5
<b>Other Interested Party</b>	28	32	16	76
<b>Total</b>	65	132	25	222

#### **Comments in favour of the Proposal**

- A wonderful opportunity for young people in Sevenoaks.
- An exciting, fresh idea for a new 21<sup>st</sup> century generation that will equip them to be leaders of the future.
- With such partners leading it and the enthusiasm and openness of the people of Sevenoaks, this will be a great asset for the future.
- An Academy in Sevenoaks would provide high quality education at local level.
- Existing arrangements involving long bus journeys hardly accord with principles of the ‘climate change’ agenda advocated by so many.
- If Central Government is ideologically opposed to the creation of more grammar schools, then the new Academy is the best option.
- This proposal will benefit the students at Wildernesse School greatly.
- The proposal is needed in order to provide better support, both teaching and facilities, to students of Wildernesse School.
- Development of an Academy will provide improved facilities which will offer greater opportunities to work in partnership with Sensio Leisure
- A fantastic opportunity not to be missed.
- Academy will be building on the strengths of the predecessor schools
- Improved facilities will enable the ambition that the schools have for their students to be realised
- The fact that it will be supported by Sevenoaks School is excellent
- Bussing children out to neighbouring towns is not good for overall standards of education and results in the children (particularly boys) who are left.
- Focus on Performing Arts and use of learning mentors and specialised literacy teachers have made a huge difference to the confidence and self-esteem of students at Bradbourne and should be integrated in the Academy
- There is much to be said for having a good state school that the whole town can be proud of.

- The Academy route is the best way forward for pupils, staff and the wider community.
- The development of the Academy would provide a better educational base and facilities with wider choice and the opportunity for vocational training.
- Public sports facilities including squash courts at the Wildernessee site should be retained and improved as part of the Academy
- The Academy scheme is ambitious and progressive and has the potential to provide even stronger sporting opportunities for both students and the general public
- The scale of the investment under discussion is impressive and makes a meaningful statement about the importance of educating our young people
- Academy will reduce unnecessary journeys out of Sevenoaks to school
- The realistic way forward for 21<sup>st</sup> century education in Sevenoaks is to provide state of the art facilities for both girls and boys, thus encouraging parents to reassess their choices and enable the majority of Sevenoaks children to access quality personalised learning in their own town
- Whilst supportive, single sex teaching must be a key feature of the Academy
- The Academy will provide facilities which will encourage learning and will have a critical mass that will allow both Academic and Vocational skills to be developed
- Students, especially those who attend Wildernessee, will be more successful in their achievements if they are placed in new surroundings

### **Comments against the Proposal**

- Instead of spending money on an Academy, the money should be spent on improving what is already in place.
- What provision will be made for those wishing to send their children to non-selective single sex schools?
- There are not enough single sex schools in this country and there are more than enough 'expressive arts' schools.
- Vehicular access and egress at Wildernessee is already a minor nightmare and a further 200+% of traffic is impractical.
- National figures show that girls at a single sex school achieve higher grades than those that go to a mixed school.
- Bradbourne is a good school and this will be ruined by mixing with an underachieving boys' school.
- Two schools into one school means saving money by selling off land and saving on staffing, to the detriment of the education of the girls at Bradbourne.
- Grammar schools have always been single sex schools so why should non-selective schools be any different? This proposal removes choice.
- Although in principle it may be a good school for Sevenoaks, the views of those parents who specifically selected Bradbourne because it is a girls' school and other reasons such as size and culture should be respected.
- The vast majority of academies already running are failing. Wildernessee is also failing and in financial trouble. However, Bradbourne is not failing so why should this school be brought in to bail out a failing school?



- Academies will never be in the same league as grammar schools; in fact most are not even in the same league as average comprehensives.
- If Wildernesse is failing and has monetary issues, then the school should be closed and the boys allocated places in other schools such as Hayesbrook, Tonbridge.
- It is important that a school is of reasonable size so students can get to know each other and not be intimidated by large numbers in an Academy.
- As a solution to local needs, two single sex environments on the existing sites could be provided under the umbrella of a single management team, continuing existing successful educational principles and practices.
- The threat of excellent staff leaving Bradbourne is a concern.
- Kent claims to be at the forefront of developing academies to increase the range and choice of schools across the county to meet local needs. However the proposal for the Academy reduces range and choice, offering another large co-educational establishment, and is therefore in contradiction of these claims where parental choice is totally overlooked.
- For an Academy to be considered, it should be in an underprivileged or deprived area, something Sevenoaks is clearly not.
- The statutory responsibility of the LA to strive to secure diversity of provision and increased responsibility for parental choice would not be met by providing a large co-educational school in the West Kent area.
- Given that the sponsors choose the governors, there is concern that they would therefore gain the running of the Academy through the Governing Body and what appears to be an independent body would actually be biased.
- The low rate of teenage pregnancy at Bradbourne could rise
- Numbers of students with Special Education Needs will rise
- Sponsor should just focus on assisting Wildernesse
- Role of Local Authority as co-sponsor is unclear. A sponsor wields too much power in an Academy.
- If children do as well in mixed schools as they do in single sex ones, why are all grammar schools single sex?
- With the current recession, it would be preferable to spend a smaller amount of money upgrading the current Wildernesse buildings instead.
- The majority of girls at Bradbourne do not want to study alongside boys. Majority of feeling is not against the creation of an academy per se but that closing down Bradbourne to make way for it would not be the best way forward.
- This appears to be an ill-conceived and rushed concept as a matter of political and financial expediency without really being concerned for the future of the current and future pupils.
- Schools should belong to and be accountable to the local community through democratic control.
- There is concern that the Academy will lose the Wildernesse specialism of maths and ICT
- It is the Local Authority's statutory responsibility to strive to secure high standards, diversity of provision and increased opportunities for parental choice. The proposed provision of a co-educational academy specialising in Languages and Expressive Arts reduces opportunities for parental choice.

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**PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE BRADBOURNE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND THE WILDERNESSE SCHOOL FOR BOYS, SEVENOAKS TO REPLACE WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY**

**Summary of points raised during the Public Meeting held on 28 April 2009 at Sevenoaks Primary School**

<b>Comment or Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Loss of Single Sex Teaching</b>	
Parents at both schools have actively chosen a single sex school because they believe that children learn best when taught without the opposite sex. Will existing students continue to be taught in this way?	There is a considerable strength of feeling about single sex teaching amongst parents and the Local Authority (LA) is very mindful of this, together with the need to build on the strengths of the two schools. It is expected that current students would continue to be taught in their single sex cohorts.
The consultation documents states that single sex teaching would be 'explored' in core subjects within the Academy. What does this actually mean?	A number of options are being considered. One would be to bring the new Year 7s, in 2010, together as a co-educational group on the Bradbourne site and introduce single sex teaching into core subjects for them, while the current students, whose parents/carers had chosen a single sex school, could continue to be taught in their single sex environment, in their existing buildings, until the new Academy building opens in 2012.
<b>Concern that Bradbourne is being lost in order to improve Wildernesse</b>	
Academies were established to drive up standards, yet Bradbourne is oversubscribed and recently described as Good overall by Ofsted. How will merging it with a school with very high levels of SEN benefit the girls at Bradbourne?	Bradbourne and Wildernesse are two sides of the same coin in Sevenoaks and the future of one cannot be determined in isolation from the other. This proposal seeks to provide a 'one off' opportunity for <b>all</b> young people in the Sevenoaks area by delivering a quality school of choice in a 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning environment.
Given that the existing staff and leadership teams from both schools will transfer to the Academy, how will this benefit the Academy given that the team at Wildernesse has presided over a failing school?	This is a unique opportunity to draw on the considerable strengths of both staff teams.
<b>Role of Sponsors</b>	
Will the Lead Sponsor benefit financially from the disposal of the land at Bradbourne when the Academy building opens at Wildernesse?	Sponsors cannot profit from their involvement with an Academy and this is a legal element of the contract with the DCSF. The nature of sponsorship is about giving, not receiving. The

	involvement of Sponsors is in order to support young people in Sevenoaks and there is no personal gain in this for them.
<b>Traffic Congestion at Wildernesse</b>	
There is already considerable traffic congestion at the entrance to the site at Wildernesse. What thought has been given to the additional traffic that an Academy will generate, in terms of safety once the new building opens?	This is an important issue which would have to be addressed as part of the planning process for opening new buildings on the Wildernesse site for September 2012. Full consultation with residents would take place and planning permission would not be forthcoming without satisfactory attendance to traffic management issues.
<b>Disposal of Bradbourne Site</b>	
What are the plans for the Bradbourne site once the new building opens at Wildernesse?	There are no plans at present for this site although the speculation and rumour concerning potential options is acknowledged.
<b>Admissions</b>	
At present, large numbers of girls, in particular, from Eynsford, West Kingsdown and Horton Kirby attend Bradbourne. If the Academy is successful, will these students still be able to obtain places?	The admissions arrangements would be agreed by the Academy's Governing Body. Ultimately young people living closest to the Academy would, in the main, have priority over those living outside of Sevenoaks. That may mean that some students who currently obtain places at Bradbourne may not be able to do so in the future, although that is more likely to affect those from neighbouring LAs, rather than North West Kent. There would also be an opportunity for the Academy to select 10% of its students on aptitude for its Expressive Arts specialism which could benefit those students living further afield.
How can the Local Authority guarantee that there will be fair admissions arrangements?	The Academy would need to adhere to the national Schools Admissions Code of Practice, in the same way that the predecessor schools do as Foundation Schools. This ensures fair practice. If necessary the LA could ask the Secretary of State to direct the Academy to take students if it was found to be in breach of not following the Code of Practice and In Year Fair Access protocols agreed across the West Kent Learning Federation.
The consultation talks about the Sevenoaks area. Will this include Edenbridge and the surrounding villages?	Edenbridge and its surrounding villages are part of the Sevenoaks District area that the Academy wishes to serve.

<p>A number of students at Bradbourne come from Bromley but may not now be able to get places at the Academy. Were families in Bromley consulted about the proposal?</p>	<p>KCC does not have a duty to provide places in Kent for students from other LAs but cannot discriminate in allocation of places if non-Kent residents apply for places at Kent schools. KCC has not been required to consult all parents/carers in a neighbouring LA but has consulted Bromley LA, together with parents/carers of students currently at the predecessor schools.</p>
<p><b>Academy Governing Body</b></p>	
<p>If the Governing Body of the Academy is appointed by Sponsors, will it also include representatives from parents and the teaching staff as at present?</p>	<p>The Sponsors, including KCC as a Co-Sponsor, can appoint a certain number of governors and this would be set out in the Memorandum and Articles of the Academy Trust. These will require a Parent Governor is included. Some academies prefer to have a parents' forum rather than one or two parent representatives on the Governing Body. There is no legal requirement to include a member of the teaching staff but it would be for the Governing Body of the Academy to take a view on this and KCC, as a Co-Sponsor, would encourage both parent and staff representation.</p>
<p><b>Behaviour and Exclusions</b></p>	
<p>How will the Academy deal with exclusions?</p>	<p>It is intended that the Academy would be a highly inclusive school, with exclusion kept to an absolute minimum. The Academy would sign up to the In Year Fair Access and Managed Moves protocols of the local West Kent Learning Federation, which would ensure that no one school has to take a disproportionate number of students with challenging behaviour, or who have been excluded from another school</p>
<p>Large, mixed sex schools often have more issues with challenging behaviour and disruption to classes</p>	<p>There are a number of very popular mixed sex schools in Kent, Surrey and East Sussex, which are the size of the proposed Academy and which have very good behaviour. It is a matter of good leadership and management, rather than size of school.</p>
<p><b>Start Times and Holidays</b></p>	
<p>Will the Academy set its own opening times and term dates?</p>	<p>The Academy would operate in the same way as the Governing Body of a Foundation School and would be able set its own opening times and term dates.</p>

<b>Safeguarding</b>	
Could teachers who have been banned by the General Teaching Council still teach at an Academy?	The Academy would be part of the same safeguarding process that exists in other mainstream schools and could not employ someone who had not satisfied safeguarding regulations.
<b>Cost of Academy</b>	
Why could the money earmarked for the Academy not be put into re-building Wildernesse and leaving Bradbourne as it is?	The money that goes into academies comes from a central 'pot' and is not available to the Local Authority to spend in any other way. The Building Schools for the Future programme, which is not due in Sevenoaks until 2017, would not provide for the rebuilding of Wildernesse because it would be considered to be too small and not viable.
If £2million has been raised for an Academy from the Sponsors, why could this money not be spent on improving the existing schools instead?	Previously this money would have gone towards the cost of building a new Academy but regulations have changed and this money now goes into an Endowment Fund for the Academy to enrich the learning opportunities of students.
If there is no money for improving the existing school buildings, why did Bradbourne recently have £0.5m taken away from it by KCC?	Government has directed that money must not be left sitting in school bank accounts, unused. KCC introduced a 'balance control mechanism' and as a result a number of schools across Kent with excessive rollovers had money clawed back and put back into the education budget to benefit all schools across the county.
<b>Transition Arrangements and Disruption to Existing Students</b>	
There is insufficient information about how students' education will not be compromised between now and the completion of the new build in 2012, which is of concern to parents/carers of all existing students	If the proposal were to be approved, project management consultants, Appleyards, would establish a Transition Group which would protect the interests of all students at both schools and ensure curricular progression and continuity. Ideas would be consulted upon in a number of stakeholder settings and information would be shared with parents/carers on a regular basis.
How will the disruption be managed whilst the new building work is taking place at Wildernesse?	KCC is rehearsed and successful at managing major building projects on operational school sites. The Wildernesse site is large enough to maintain 'business as usual' at the school whilst progressing the new build.

Concern that the uncertainty over the Academy plans will result in teachers being disillusioned and look for other jobs	Staff employed at both schools, at the point of the Academy opening, would be protected under TUPE legislation, and staff with substantive contracts at the time of the transfer have the right to transfer to the Academy with existing terms and conditions of service. There would be a full and extensive programme of consultation meetings and other support arrangements, with both staff teams, in due course.
<b>Role of Governing Bodies of Predecessor Schools</b>	
The government booklet on setting up academies states that, if the governing bodies of the predecessor schools vote against the proposal, then it cannot proceed	The LA has the legal power to close the schools and does not need the agreement of the Governing Bodies, although their views are carefully considered as part of the consultation process. The Secretary of State makes the final decision on whether the Academy proposal can be implemented.
<b>Performance of Academies</b>	
All academies are introduced to replace failing schools and have poor results.	This is not the case. For example, Marsh Academy doubled its results just a year after it first opened and there are many other such successes. There is also greater evidence of impact when there is a strong education partner, as in this case in this proposal.
A number of academies, such as Leigh Academy, are experimenting with class sizes as large as 60. This can only have a negative effect on the teaching of students	This is not unique to academies and has been tried in a number of schools across the county and indeed the country. By bringing classes together for certain lessons, the students can be supported in a flexible range of ways. Large lecture style groupings can be very effective depending on the learning activity and objectives, providing for individuals and smaller groups to also be supported.
<b>Alternatives to an Academy</b>	
Given that Bradbourne is so popular and parents do not want it to change, why could Bradbourne not be made bigger and the accommodation at Wildernesse not be improved?	This is not an option as there is not the surplus capacity available to enlarge Bradbourne nor the money within KCC to address the accommodation issues at Wildernesse. The Academy is the only option available.
If the decision is made to build the new academy on the site at Wildernesse, could a church school be built on the Bradbourne site as an alternative for parents?	The size of the Academy cannot be reduced because that has been agreed by Government and to open a new school there has to be a need for additional school places.

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**PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE BRADBOURNE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND  
THE WILDERNESSE SCHOOL FOR BOYS, SEVENOAKS,  
TO REPLACE WITH AN ACADEMY**

**Update to SOAB Report on representations received since the print  
deadline.**

**Responses to the Public Consultation**

*Written Responses*

1. [1] This proposal has been the subject of lively debate locally generating a number of articles in the press. As expected, the proposal has prompted a notable response, particularly from parents/carers of the two schools.

[2] As of the closing date, of 15 May 2009, 216 written responses have been received, of which 61 are in favour, 130 against, and 25 are undecided or did not state a clear view, for or against.

[3] An updated Appendix 5, including comments that have come in immediately after the closing date, will be tabled at the meeting.

**Views of Local Member of Parliament**

2. (1) Michael Fallon, MP, has written reporting a large number of responses from constituents. He has also met with staff at both schools and discussed the issues involved with local councillors and others. He was able to attend most of the Public Meeting on 28 April.

[2] He is clear that the Wildernesse School has no prospect of a certain future without substantial redevelopment, and appreciates that, due to its recent improvement, the Bradbourne School now has capacity issues which restrict its further success.

[3] He declares support for the concept of Academies, and notes how they can completely re-invigorate schooling in their communities. In Sevenoaks, he recognises that it will be essential to command the confidence of parents of both schools, and particularly those who have specifically chosen single-sex education. Closing the two schools will, he believes, reduce parental choice when there is no other girls-only school within reasonable distance.

[4] He is hopeful, that if the Academy is now to proceed, that sponsors will address very carefully the need to maintain single-sex teaching where it is appropriate, and not just for the children currently attending.

[5] His one further concern is that the Academy will be a very large school, which will need to be managed in such a way as to enhance pastoral care for its pupils. He notes that younger, less confident children can be easily submerged in schools of the proposed Academy size and he hopes that

senior management will consider seriously how the new school might be developed in smaller units, albeit on a single campus in due course.

### **Views of the Town Council**

3. Sevenoaks Town Council does not consider that the case to merge The Bradbourne and The Wildernesse Schools and to replace them with an Academy has been made sufficiently robustly in its current form and would ask Kent County Council to review the current proposal with a view to meeting more appropriately the needs of all of the Sevenoaks' school pupils in this age group.

### **Views of the Diocesan Authorities**

4. No views have been received.

### **Views of the Learning and Skills Council**

5. No views have been received.

### **Views of the Governing Bodies**

6. [1] Both Governing Bodies submitted letters of support 'in principle' for the establishment of an Academy, when the Expression of Interest was submitted for Ministerial approval.

[2] The Chairman of Governors of the Wildernesse School has written to confirm oral feedback, already received, in favour of closing the current two schools and replacing them with an Academy.

[3] He notes that while the majority of governors favour an Academy, there is a minority that believes the school could 'be made a viable stand' and that the Local Authority has not done enough either to maintain the fabric of the existing building or to support the school.

[4] Soundings of Wildernesse parents/carers and pupils indicate that a majority are in favour of an Academy, although those with children reaching critical exam stage are anxious about continuity of education.

[5] A majority of staff is reported to be in favour of an Academy although there are worries and uncertainties around the issues associated with combining the two staff groups.

[6] Governors and staff are hugely frustrated that The Wildernesse has been portrayed in the consultation as a failing school when its headline A-Cs and Value Added results match, or are better, than many of the new academies.

[7] Finally there is concern that should the consultation fail, KCC does not have an alternative strategy for boys education in Sevenoaks and that in an environment of parental choice and subsidised travel, more rather than less pupils will select schools outside of Sevenoaks, resulting in the school's closure.

## **Views of Students**

6. 17 replies have been received from students, 2 of which are in favour, 13 are against and 2 are undecided. The majority of respondents have not made any specific comments, but those who have include comment on, loss of single-sex provision, potential for disruption and poor behaviour in a co-educational school, good access to the Bradbourne site in contrast to traffic problems at the Wildernesse site, the recent 'Good' Ofsted judgement and the success of the Bradbourne being diluted, the popularity of Bradbourne with so many students travelling from far afield.

## **Views of the Partnership Board**

7. (1) The Sevenoaks South Local Children's Services Partnership strongly supports this proposal as it offers a fantastic opportunity to enhance the quality of secondary education in the Sevenoaks area by building on the considerable strengths of the Bradbourne and Wildernesse schools.

(2) The LCSP is particularly keen to ensure that the needs of the local community through enhanced community facilities and extended school services are central to the development of the Academy. Whilst independent of Local Authority control, partners would wish to ensure that the Academy would work closely with its neighbouring schools, partner primaries and multi-agency service providers such as those currently delivering important community services from both of the current school sites.

## **Views of the Area Children's Services Officer**

8. [1] The Area Children's Services Officer is excited by the potential for this proposal to transform what is currently available at secondary level in the area and for it to establish an excellent school of choice for the young people of Sevenoaks, in Sevenoaks.

[2] She recognises that a proposal of this magnitude, with inevitable uncertainty at this stage of the process, will generate anxiety and concern. The stakeholder phase of the consultation process, to be led by Appleyards, DSSF appointed independent consultants, and forward focused on what the Academy must be like to capture local imagination, gain confidence and satisfy a range of interests and concerns, will do much to ameliorate current unrest.

[3] In the meantime, respondents to the written consultation and the views of those speaking at the Public Meeting, concentrate on four main issues:

- i) Loss of single-sex education and, with that a reduction in parental/carer choice*
- ii) Confusion about the process and frustration about insufficient authoritative information regarding what the Academy would be like and how it would function*
- iii) Failure to understand why the proposal has to link the two schools together and why single school solutions have not been proposed*

*iv) Site related issues and concerns, underpinned by suspicion about what may already be planned for the Bradbourne site, post opening of the new build on the Wildernessee site; and how traffic management issues might be addressed on the Wildernessee site, post Academy opening there.*

4. To address these in sequence:

*i) Loss of single-sex education and, with that a reduction in parental/carer choice*

[1] Kent has, and would continue to have a choice, range and diversity of schools that is outside of norms for most Local Authorities. While reducing a degree of choice for some currently choosing Sevenoaks single-sex schools, this proposal would increase choice for those currently choosing to send their children considerable distances, often over county boundaries, to co-educational provision.

[2] Each Academy is unique, shaped in consultation with key stakeholders, and able to add to the choice and diversity available locally. Careful regard would be given to continuing the best of single-sex teaching where it is judged to have most impact, but within a co-educational setting that would provide a further range of learning opportunities for young people, so combining the best of 'both worlds'.

[3] Transition arrangements would ensure that students placed at either of the current two schools, prior to the Academy proposal becoming known (i.e. current Y8 and above), would complete their main-school education in their current single sex cohorts, based in their existing school accommodation. Following Y11, they would, anyway, progress into a co-educational 6<sup>th</sup> Form.

*ii) Confusion about the process and frustration about insufficient authoritative information regarding what the Academy would be like and how it would function*

[1] The Public Consultation Document (Appendix 4) attempts to clarify the two separate but closely related strands of consultation whereby KCC must lead on the necessary closure of the predecessor schools but has no remit to consult about opening an Academy because academies are independent of Local Authority 'control'. This is understandably difficult for the public to unpick.

[2] Detailed consultation about the proposed Academy's ethos, aims, culture, curriculum and organisation will begin very shortly, led by independent consultants, Appleyards, appointed by the DCSF and accountable to sponsors.

*iii) Failure to understand why the proposal has to link the two schools together and why single school solutions have not been proposed*

[1] Any proposal that concentrated on just one of these two schools, even if it was feasible, would disadvantage the other. If the Expression of Interest had proposed an Academy with regard to Wildernessee only, and if that could have been deemed viable, and if sponsors could have

been found, and approved by Ministers, to back it, Bradbourne would have been left the poor relation in terms of learning environment. Bradbourne, in its own right, is not eligible for Academy status.

[2] An 8FE structure is optimum, as the Kent Secondary Strategy confirms, for a secondary school, providing a critical mass of both human and material resource that can be deployed to maximum effect. Within that overall structure, options for single-sex teaching within a co-educational setting could be explored and 'schools within the school' models can be developed, drawing on Co-sponsor Sevenoaks School experience of house/home systems.

*iv) Site related issues and concerns, underpinned by suspicion about what may already be planned for the Bradbourne site, post opening of the new build on the Wildernessee site; and how traffic management issues might be addressed on the Wildernessee site, post Academy opening there.*

[1] Options for the Bradbourne site, once the new Academy were to be located on the current Wildernessee site would be explored in due course. Any plans that might emerge would be subject to full public consultation and scrutiny, as this with this Academy proposal.

[2] Traffic management issues relating to the Wildernessee site would form a critical part of the process towards gaining planning permission and, again, would be subject to full public consultation processes.

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