



AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, 8th October, 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 - 16 July 2009 (Pages 1 - 2)
4. Proposed Closure of Astor of Hever (Community) School, Maidstone and its Replacement with a Government Funded Academy (Pages 3 - 16)
5. Proposed Closure of Archers Court Maths and Computing College and its Replacement with a Government Funded Academy (Pages 17 - 26)
6. The Future of High School Provision in Deal (Pages 27 - 38)

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, 30 September 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.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 16 July 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr C J Capon, Mr G Cooke (Substitute) (Substitute for Ms S J Carey), Mr M C Dance, Mr P J Homewood, Mr M J Northey, Mr M J Vye and Mrs S V Hohler.

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Vice-Chairman
(Item 3)

Mr M Northey proposed and Mrs V Dagger seconded that Mr Peter Homewood be elected Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Board.

Carried Unanimously

2. Minutes - 21 May 2009 and 25 June 2009
(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 29 May and 25 June 2009 be agreed as a true record.

3. The Proposed Relocation of the Foreland (Community Special) School to the Hartsdown Technology College site
(Item 5 - Report by Mr Grahame Ward, CFE Director – Resources)

(Mr R Burgess made a declaration of having a personal interest on the grounds that he is a Governor at the Garlinge School)

(1) This report detailed the results of the public consultation on the proposal to relocate Foreland School and sought the views of the Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to relocate the school to purpose built accommodation on the site of Hartsdown Technology College. An additional paper was circulated at the meeting setting out the views of Mr Roger Gale MP.

(2) Mr Doole said that the Buildings for the Future Programme would enable the complete re-build of both these schools to a design of the highest quality that would provide outstanding facilities for all pupils. It was proposed that the two schools would share the same single building, creating a fully inclusive learning community for pupils aged 2 to 19 years with all the necessary safeguards built in. The proposal was based on the desire of both schools to make available to all their pupils, the widest possible range of educational opportunities and create a fully inclusive

learning community and co-location would make available to all students a range of specialist facilities and equipment to which they would not otherwise have access. The arrangements would also provide wider opportunities for collaborative working and staff development and discussions were taking place with the East Kent PCT and others about locating health and other agency services within the new complex, thereby making available specialist on site facilities for pupils and their families.

(3) In response to concerns which had been expressed about possible traffic problems, Mr Doole said that Kent Highway Services had been fully involved with the planning of the project to ensure that potential traffic problems were kept to a minimum. The increase in the number of students from Foreland would be offset by the planned reduction in the role of Hartsdown as the number of secondary aged students declined over the next few years. The particular transport needs of Forelands pupils and any increased traffic ensuing from the development of the multi-agency centre would also be structured particularly carefully so that the traffic implications were kept to a minimum.

(3) Following further discussion, the Advisory Board agreed to support the issuing of a public notice to relocate the Forelands School from its existing site to the proposed site at Hartsdown and that the Cabinet Member be advised accordingly.

4. Schools Applying for Foundation/Trust Status *(Item 6 - Report by Director of Operations)*

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director Children Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 8 October 2009

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF ASTOR OF HEVER (COMMUNITY) SCHOOL, MAIDSTONE AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to undertake a public consultation on the closure of Astor of Hever (Community) School and its replacement with a government funded academy subject to Ministerial approval.

Introduction

1. (1) Astor of Hever (Community) School is a Specialist Sports College and admits 150 girls and boys into each year group. Its age range is 11 to 18 years. The school has the capacity to admit 869 pupils; 735 pupils into years 7 to 11 and a sixth form with the capacity to admit 134 boys and girls into years 12 and 13. As at spring 2009, the school had 568 pupils on roll in Years 7 to 11 and 93 in the sixth form, a total roll 661 pupils.

(2) According to Local Authority pupil place forecasting data, the number of years 7 to 11 pupils in the Maidstone area is predicted to fall over the next five years. Forecasts indicate a rise in pupils opting to remain in education post 16, but this rise is balanced by the reduction in overall 7 to 11 numbers.

(3) Astor of Hever is part of the Maidstone 1 Local Children's Service Partnerships of schools. It occupies a site on the Oakwood Park Campus. See Appendix 1 for site map and Appendix 2 for a map showing the school site in relation to other schools in the area. The school largely serves the urban community of West Maidstone. Appendix 3 shows the distribution of pupils within a three mile radius. Appendix 4 is included to show that there are few pupils who live more than three miles away.

(4) The proportion of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs is 2.3%, slightly above the Kent average of 2% and the National average of 2.1%. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 14.4%, which is above the Kent average of 10.7%, but well below the current National average of 23.8%.

(5) Astor of Hever has been without a substantive Headteacher since April 2008. The Local Authority required the school to enter into a partnership with The Westlands School (a high performing high school in Kent), because of its challenging circumstances and lack of experienced senior leadership. Under this arrangement the Headteacher of Westlands School has acted as Executive Headteacher. From

September 2009, a new collaboration has been established for 2009/10 with Mascalls School.

Academy Proposal

2. (1) The Astor of Hever Academy will open in January 2011 in existing buildings and move into its new buildings in the academic year 2013-2014. It will be a high performing comprehensive school for boys and girls of all abilities aged between 11 and 19 years located on the Oakwood Park campus in West Maidstone. The Academy will develop, in collaboration with neighbouring schools further and Higher Education Institutions, a post-16 curriculum which will directly meet local needs.

(2) The new Academy will have a strong vision, developed by the Sponsor (Woodard Schools) in consultation with the local community. It will be led by an Executive Principal and a governing body, whose membership will be appointed by the Woodard Trust, but to include additionally LA representation and staff and parent governors. All pupils from Astor of Hever School will transfer over to the new Academy. The Academy will provide for:

- 750 pupils (aged 11-16 years)
- 150 post 16 pupils (aged 16-19 years)

(3) Kent County Council has secured the skills and expertise of Woodard Schools¹ as co-sponsor for the development of the Academy. The resources of the Woodard group will be used to support the development of the Academy. Woodard's model of education will be the driving force behind the new academy in raising the expectations of young people and the local community.

(4) The involvement of parents and students in their learning is central to the Woodard vision. The new Academy will work with parents and students to set goals, identify strategies for learning and develop appropriate, personalised support structures. The Woodard Schools website states:

“A Woodard Academy reflects the culture and vision of Woodard Schools. We believe that a good education should be a given but in addition each child should be treated as an individual, given opportunities where they can flourish and have the confidence and the tools needed to cope with the demands and responsibilities of adult life.

Educating 27,000 pupils a year and employing over 2,500 educational colleagues, we have an unrivalled breadth and knowledge in education across both the private and state sectors. We actively welcome students and staff from all faiths or no faith at all, adding to the diversity and rich culture of our school communities. ”

(5) Representatives of Woodard Schools have met with the governing body. It was made clear that the vision for the school would be developed by Woodard in full consultation with all stakeholders, rather than being simply a pre-formulated one imposed on the school. Woodard Schools Will bring to Astor of Hever an emphasis on developing in young people personal and social values, in addition to striving for high educational achievement. There will be a strong focus upon meeting the needs of the

¹ Further information regarding Woodard Schools can be found on <http://www.woodard.co.uk/index.htm>

individual and developing the whole person. Although Woodard Schools' origins are in the Church of England, it emphasises that it welcomes members of all faiths and none, and that the values which it espouses are ones which are essentially common to all major religions and our society at large.

(6) Woodard has links to over 40 schools and believes that the pool of educational expertise upon which it can draw will be of value in supporting Astor of Hever's development. However, Woodard also strongly believes that the school should remain part of the family of Maidstone schools, with the continuing local collaboration which that implies.

(7) Following its meeting with representatives of Woodard Schools, Astor of Hever's governing body voted unanimously for Woodard Schools to become the school's academy sponsor.

(8) It is probable that the academy's specialism will be confirmed through the Expression of Interest process, although it may be finalised during the feasibility stage.

Site and accommodation Issues

3. (1) Astor of Hever's main school building was built in 1970 and is of SEAC construction with steel glazed screens, brick cavity walls and flat roofs with asphalt coverings. The school does not currently have an assembly hall and has five mobile classrooms as additional teaching facilities. The dining facility is small and uninviting. The front entrance is not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. The general consensus is that the main school building is outdated and in a poor state of repair and should be completely rebuilt. There is a recently-opened building which incorporates a reception area, assembly hall and six classrooms. It is anticipated that this would be retained in the rebuild.

(2) In September 2005, KCC acquired, on behalf of Astor of Hever School, a leisure facility (The Westborough Sports Centre) which is based on the same site as the school. The school previously operated it under a joint use agreement with Maidstone Borough Council. Community use of this building is currently being reviewed because it has been running at a loss to the school's budget. The building is considered to be outdated and remains a significant maintenance liability to the school. It is expected that any new building will involve consultation with the local community to ascertain whether community aspirations may be met.

(3) Reopening Astor of Hever School in new and refurbished facilities, with a full suite of extended services, would serve the needs of the young people and community of West Maidstone and provide an environment fit for learning in the 21st century.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

4. (1) A budget has yet to be confirmed by the DCSF for the Academy's development. The capital costs of the scheme will be met by the DCSF.

(2) KCC will incur administrative and development costs in the period leading up to the opening of the Academy. These include the costs of the appointed consultants. These costs will be met out of the DCSF budget for the Academy.

(3) Woodard as a multiple educational sponsor is not itself required to make a cash contribution to the academy. The Woodard Trust will however have a responsibility for encouraging contributions into the endowment.

Revenue

(4) The Academy will receive its funding directly from the DCSF each year. It will be funded at a rate equivalent to other Kent specialist schools, and have a proportional share of the central Local Authority budget.

Human

(5) Consultation will take place in accordance with the requirements of TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment, Regulations 1981) and the employment rights of all current staff who transfer to the Academy are protected. Where any members of staff are unable to transfer to the Academy, this will be managed in accordance with relevant employment policies and procedures. Any employment costs associated with new Academy staff are borne by the DCSF.

Views of the Local Members

5. (1) The local members for Maidstone Central are Mr Dan Daley and Mr Malcolm Robertson. Mr Daley and Mr Robertson recognise the need for complete regeneration of Astor of Hever School and support in principle any means which will achieve this. They will, nevertheless, wish to be consulted about detailed proposals as they are developed.

School Improvement Implications

6. (1) It was last inspected by Ofsted in April 2009 and was graded as 4 – inadequate. The school was given notice to improve. Of particular concern was achievements and standards where it was identified that:

"Standards are well below average by Year 11 and students' achievement is inadequate because they are not making sufficient progress between Years 7 and 11. This is reflected in the school's GCSE examination results, which have declined over the past three years on almost all measures. They were exceptionally low in 2008, with most groups of students underachieving in relation to their starting points. Although the results at five or more A to C grades including English and mathematics were close to the school's targets, these targets were insufficiently challenging. The school's results in AS and A-level examinations in 2008 were well below average, and students underachieved in relation to their GCSE performance, with particular weaknesses in the results in some vocational courses. Standards remain well below average but, as a result of the school's actions, current students make satisfactory progress."*

The full report can be viewed at

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/109555/\(as\)/118795_326892.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/109555/(as)/118795_326892.pdf)

(2) Astor of Hever has made an impressive gain of 8% in the 5A*-C including English and mathematics figure, based on provisional results for August 2009. This still leaves the school as part of the National Challenge, but is an encouraging gain. A gain of 11% in the total 5A*-C figure underlines the improvements the school is making.

Jonathan Whitcombe from Westlands school is now returning to his own school, and his post of Executive headteacher is being taken by Vanessa Everett from Mascalls School.

(3) Key Stage 3 data is currently not available.

GCSE	2007	2008	2009
5A*-C	32%	33.8%	54.7%
5A*-C EM	24%	19.0%	27%

Equality Issues

7. (1) The development of an Academy will broaden the opportunities available to the young people and neighbouring community of West Maidstone. The Academy will need to comply with legislation regarding Disability Discrimination, Employment Law etc. The proposal does not raise any particular equalities issues.

(2) In 2008 (the latest data available) Astor of Hever School had 21 pupils with English as an additional language (3.6%). This compares against a Kent average of 3.6% and a National average of 10.5%.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

8. (1) 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 Academy and it is also expected that a school travel plan will be produced prior to the opening of the Academy.

Proposed Timetable

9. Should public consultation be agreed, the following timetable is proposed:

SOAB	08 October 2009
Start of Public Consultation	November 2009
Publication of consultation document	November 2009
Public meeting	November/December 2009
Closing date for responses	December 2009
Report to School Organisation Advisory Board	20 January 2010
Cabinet Member decision	February 2010
Issue public notice	February 2010
End of public notice period	March 2010
Decision by Local Authority	March 2010
Proposed implementation	January 2011

Recommendations

10. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on the proposal for a public consultation to be undertaken on the proposal for the closure of Astor of Hever (Community) School and its replacement as a government funded academy subject to Ministerial approval.

Chris Jones
Area Children's Services Officer
Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling
Tel 01233 898560

The local members are Mr Dan Daley and Malcolm Robertson

Background Documents:

None



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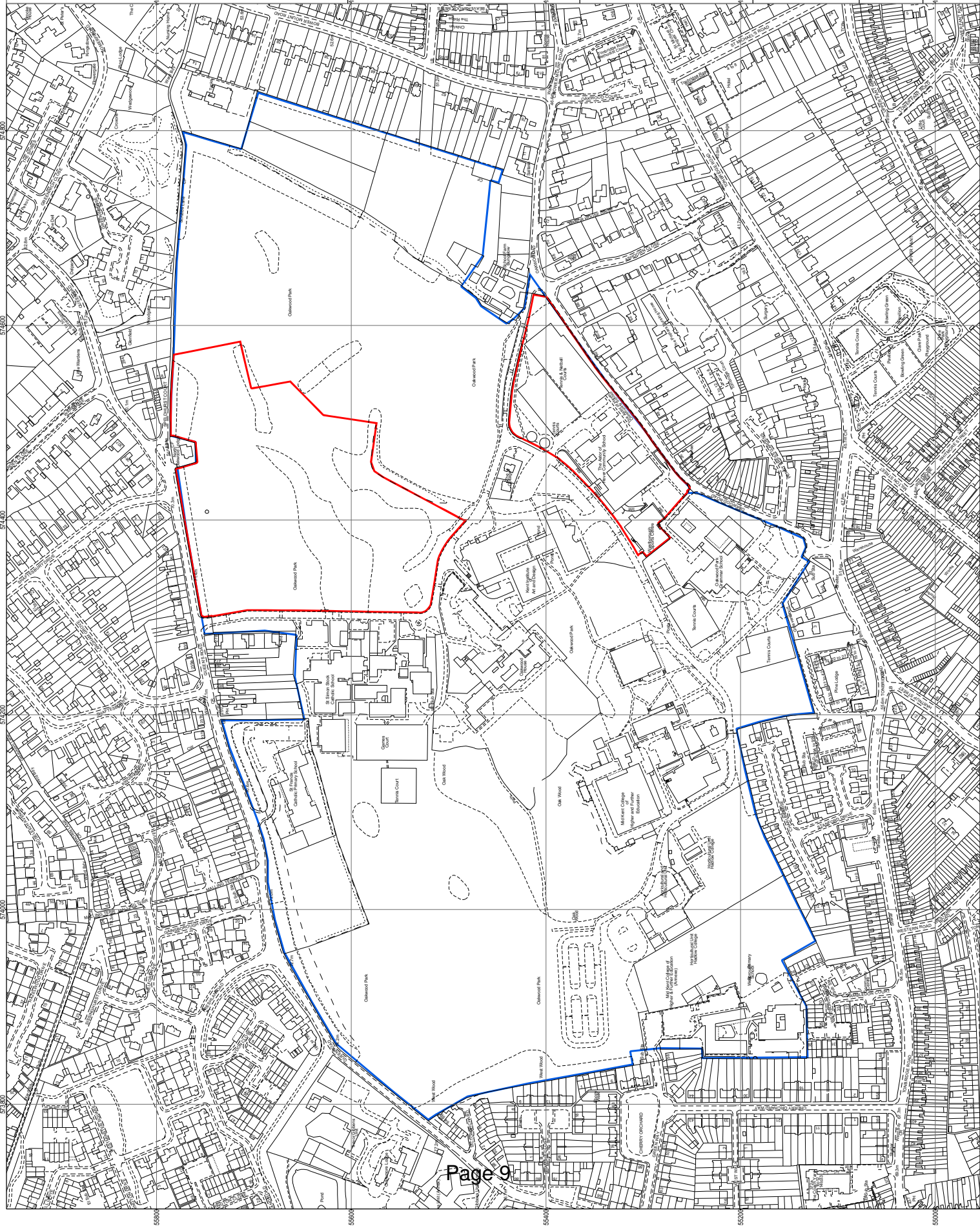


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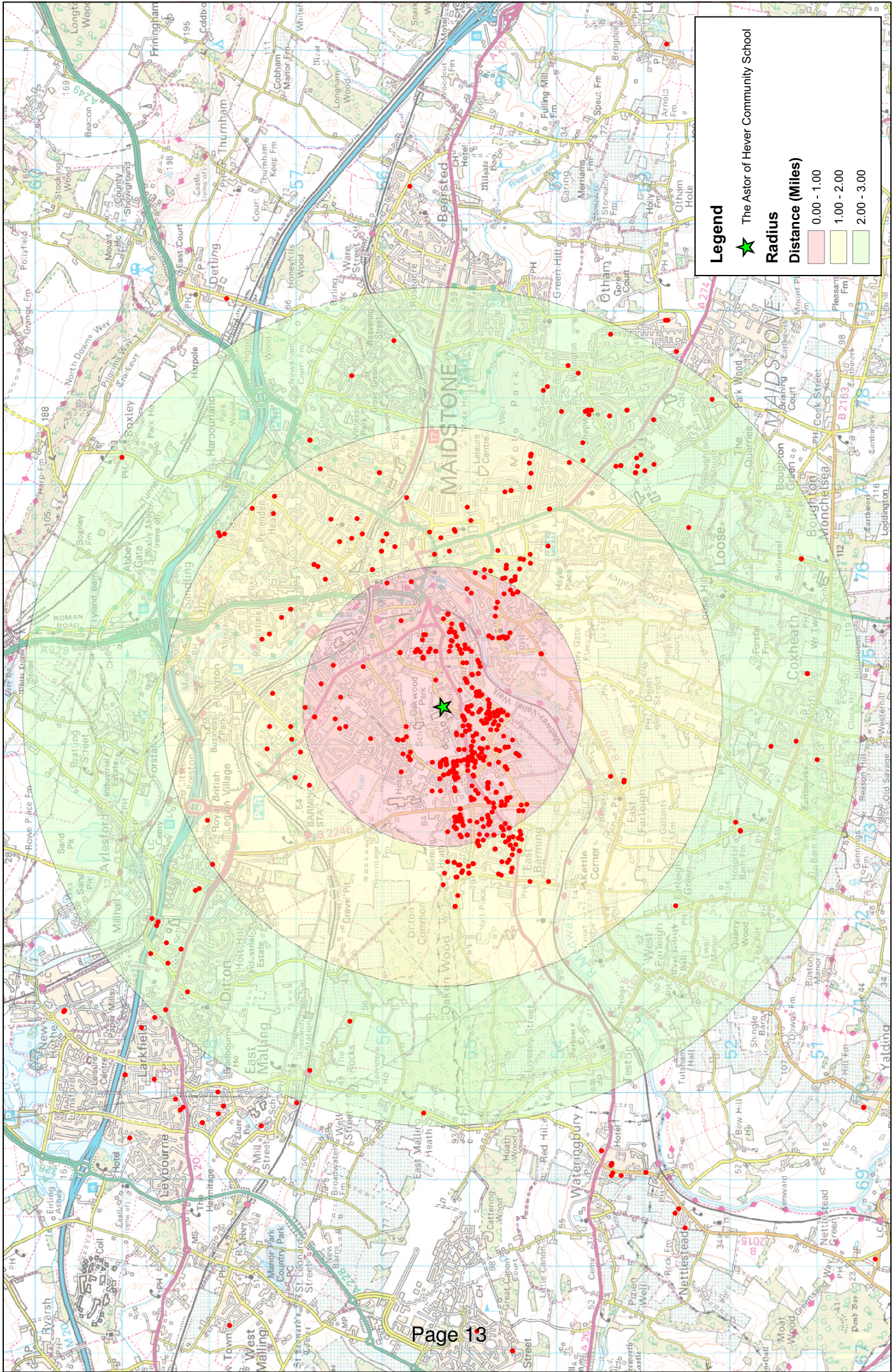
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Pupils Attending The Astor of Hever Community School



Legend

- ★ The Astor of Hever Community School

Radius

Distance (Miles)

- 0.00 - 1.00
- 1.00 - 2.00
- 2.00 - 3.00

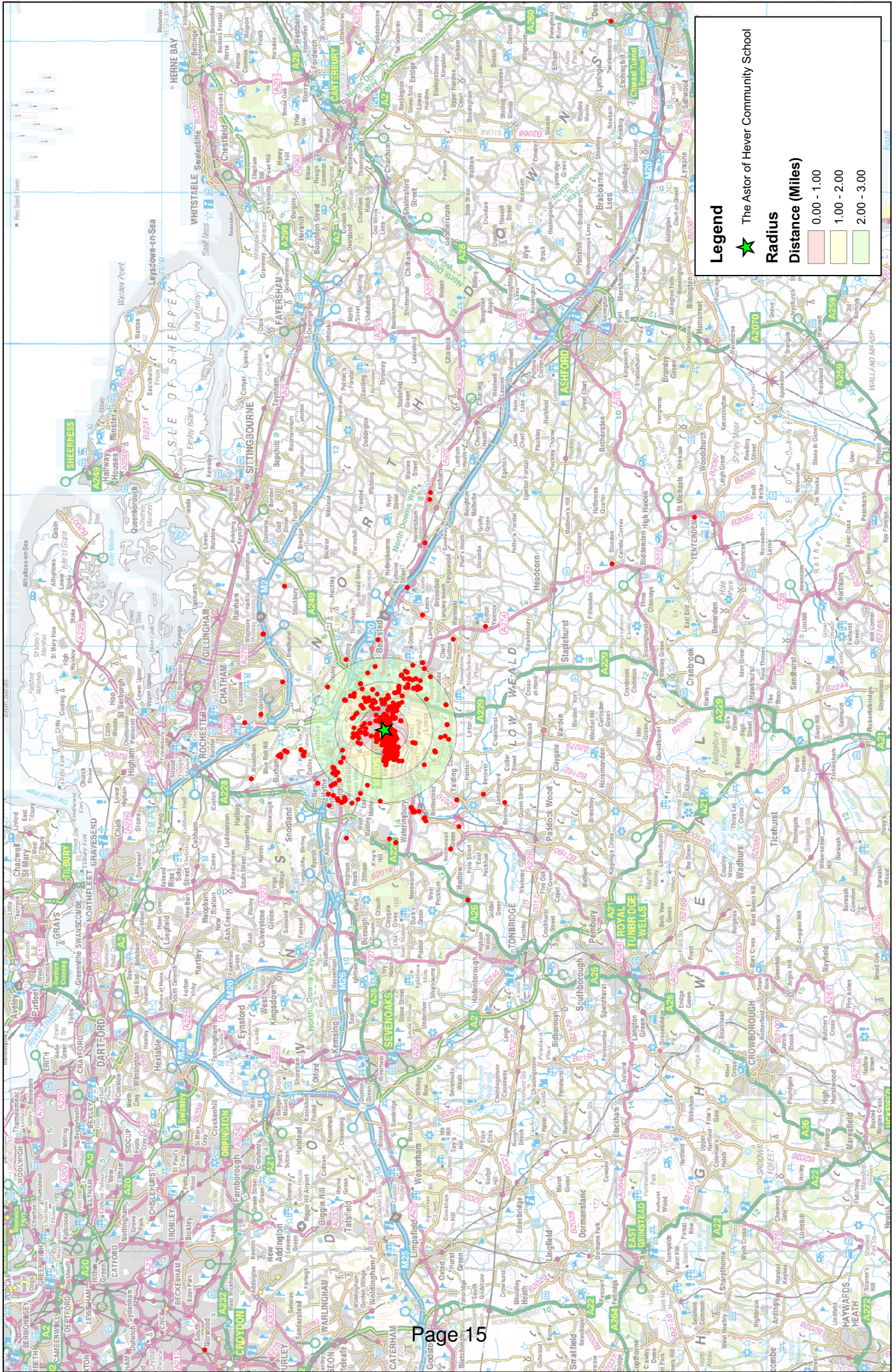
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M Sharing information for better outcomes

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Pupils Attending The Astor of Hever Community School



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By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 8 October 2009

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF ARCHERS COURT MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on a proposal to undertake a Public Consultation on the closure of Archers Court Maths and Computing College in order that it may be replaced with a government funded Academy.

Introduction

1. (1) Archers Court Maths and Computing College is an 11 – 18 mixed non – selective school with 809 students on roll at 11 – 16 and a sixth form of 171. The School serves the needs of students living within Dover Town as well as some of the surrounding villages. In addition the school has a specialist unit, Aspen 2 which caters for students with Profound, Severe and Complex needs. A dot map showing the home location of students is attached as Appendix 1.

(2) In 2008, the percentage of pupils at Archers Court gaining 5 A* - C grades or equivalent was 47.5% reflecting a continuing improvement in performance since 2005. Nevertheless in 2008 the numbers of students achieving 5 A* - C including English and Mathematics was 21.9%, placing the school in the National Challenge category. Where a school is performing below 30% 5 A* - C and is unlikely to achieve that level of attainment by 2011, the Local Authority is required to consider a structural solution which will enable the school to secure and sustain the necessary long term improvement. Establishing an academy to replace the existing school represents potentially a structural solution within the criteria set out by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Background

2. (1) Archers Court Maths & Computing College, is a good school with significant strengths. However, there is recognition that attainment levels will only be significantly improved and sustained if a structural solution is implemented. The DCSF identifies the following as possible structural solutions.

- Closure
- Amalgamation
- Federation with a high performing school
- Replacement by a trust school or a National Challenge Trust School
- Replacement by an Academy

(2) Closure and dispersal of students elsewhere is not an option. There is insufficient capacity in other schools to accommodate the students who would be displaced and the strengths of the existing school would be lost.

(3) Given the size, location and profile of other local schools amalgamation is not an option.

(4) Federation with a high performing school is a theoretical option however this would fail to secure the formal engagement and leadership of Canterbury Christ Church University, nor would it provide the flexibilities which come with academy status.

(5) The establishment of a Trust school or National Challenge Trust school would potentially be an option, assuming that an external partner could be found to play a leading role in the Trust. However, in itself this would not address the infrastructure issues or provide some of the potential advantages associated with academy status.

(6) The establishment of an academy would provide a radical solution which would enable the school maximum flexibility in organising and tailoring its curriculum offer according to local needs and circumstances. It would also deliver a substantial new build, providing first class learning facilities for all students. This option is strongly supported by the existing leadership and governing body of the school.

The Proposal

3. (1) An Academy in Dover would be established following the necessary closure of Archers Court. An Expression of Interest was lodged with the DCSF, who in July 2009 agreed that the proposal move to the feasibility stage. Appleyards have been appointed as project managers and will oversee a separate consultation process on the establishment of the new academy, which will take place in the autumn potentially in parallel with the Local Authority consultation on school closure. The Local Authority retains responsibility for consultation on the linked closure of the existing school.

(2) The proposal is to create a co-education, five form entry Academy in Dover catering for 750 11-16 year old students and 200 16-19 year old students. The Academy will replace the Archers Court Maths & Computing College and the name of the Academy will be decided during feasibility. It is proposed that the Aspen 2 Unit will remain part of the school and transfer to the Academy. The Academy will be sponsored by Canterbury Christ Church University as lead sponsor, with Kent County Council, Dover Grammar School for Boys and Dover Grammar School for Girls as co-sponsors. Canterbury Christ Church University is a highly respected Higher Education provider with a wealth of ideas and experience to contribute including considerable strength in the area of staff and student development. Dover Grammar School for Boys is a specialist Business & Enterprise School. Dover Grammar School for Girls is a Humanities College. Both schools have an excellent record in developing high quality education provision and a detailed knowledge of the local communities in Dover. Collectively, the Sponsors and partners are able to draw on extensive skills and expertise in the fields of education, research, business and organisational leadership.

(3) It is proposed that the Academy will open in September 2010 in existing buildings with a target occupation of new buildings in September 2013. The Sponsors' ambition for the Academy is for it to be a learning community at the heart of Dover, bringing together education and children's services, which places students and their families at the centre of everything that the Academy does. The Academy would be

focussed on the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for children and young people, within the context of the Children's Trust arrangements in Kent.

(4) The Academy would seek to provide:

- specialist status and centre of excellence quality for Mathematics & Computing and Music;
- a good academic/vocational balance, with full coverage of the four core National Curriculum subjects;
- an 11-19 age range with innovative partnerships with the two Grammar Schools to deliver the 14-19 curriculum;
- a focused early intervention to improve students' capabilities and address their particular needs;
- a local collaborative partnership with the two Grammar Schools that will promote high quality teaching and build economies of scale by sharing teaching staff in subject shortage areas.

(5) The Sponsors, working in a dynamic partnership, will establish and develop a robust governance that draws on a wide ranging base of expertise. This strong leadership will seek to ensure that the Academy achieves good outcomes for students. The Sponsors will seek to develop an Academy that promotes a new model of learning that:

- links the acquisition of knowledge directly to the experience of the world;
- brings together people from different places to exchange ideas and skills;
- promotes enterprise for wealth creation and active citizenship;
- gives responsibility to students as citizens for the conduct of their lives, relationships and learning.

(6) It is proposed that the Aspen II unit, currently part of Archers Court Maths & Computing College be retained as part of the new Academy.

Site Issues

4. (1) Archers Court is located on an extensive site which would enable the new build to be developed, away from the existing school buildings, minimising disruption to students. See appendix 2.

(2) There are some relatively new buildings and facilities on the Archers Court site which could potentially be assimilated into the new Academy design subject to feasibility.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

5. (1) A budget has yet to be confirmed by the DCSF for the Academy's development. The capital costs of the scheme will be met by the DCSF.

(2) Appleyards, the appointed management consultants, will receive funding from the DCSF to cover feasibility costs.

(3) Canterbury Christ Church University as a multiple educational sponsor is not itself required to make a cash contribution to the Academy. Christ Church will however have a responsibility for encouraging contributions into the endowment.

(4) The Dover Academy Trust (name to be determined during feasibility) will receive its funding directly from the DCSF each year. It will be funded at a rate equivalent to other Kent specialist schools, and have a proportional share of the central Local Authority budget.

Human

(5) Consultation would take place in accordance with the requirements of TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment, Regulations 1981). Costs of new staffing (TUPE applies to current staff) and costs associated with TUPE, including any valid termination of employment for staff that cannot transfer or be deployed elsewhere in Kent schools, would be negotiated with the DCSF on a case by case basis.

(6) There is a statutory requirement to recruit the Academy principal via a competitive recruitment process following national advertisement. The existing headteacher is eligible to apply for the post should she choose to do so.

Views of the Local Member

6. Mr Bryan Cope, the Local Member, is of the view that the proposal is an opportunity to acquire state of the art facilities for a local school. He is in favour of proceeding to consultation on the proposal.

Views of the Governing Body

7. The governing body has been consulted and understand the reasons for the proposal. The governors fully support the option of replacing the school with a government funded Academy.

Views of the Local Children Service Partnership Board

8. The Partnership has been consulted and is of the view that the aims of the Archers Court proposal are broadly in line with the objectives of the board.

School Improvement Implications

9. (1) The closure of the school to provide for the establishment of an Academy would lead to new 'state of the art' facilities, curriculum innovation, together with the recruitment and retention of high quality staff. The significant contribution of the sponsors in supporting school improvement plus investment in facilities and the curriculum and funding flexibility that the Academy would bring, would have a positive impact on current and future standards of attainment.

(2) Archers Court Maths and Computing College was last inspected in September 2007 and graded as "good" with all members of staff "focused on raising standards whilst providing thoughtful and attentive care for every student". "From well below average starting points, many students achieve well, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and do better than predicted in their GCSEs in Year 11. Standards in all years are below average but they have improved considerably over the past four years".

(3) As a 'wide – ability' school a new academy would have the capacity to meet the needs of a broad ability spectrum with a potentially positive impact in raising overall standards.

Equality Issues

10. There are no specific equality implications arising from this proposal.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

11. The establishment of an academy as a 5 form entry school to replace the existing school in its current buildings will have minimal impact in the short term. The new academy will actually be smaller than the existing school, reflecting the impact of falling secondary school rolls in the area. The planning and construction of new buildings will involve consultation with planners on transport and the environment amongst other issues.

Proposed Timetable

12.	
SOAB 1 meeting	8 Oct 2009
Consultation period	19 October to 30 November 2009
Public meeting	week commencing 2 November 2009
SOAB 2 meeting	3 December 2009
Decision by Cabinet Member	21 December 2009
Public Notice Period	14 January to 25 February 2010
Decision by Cabinet Member	5 March 2010
Referral to Adjudicator (if required)	2 April 2010
Adjudicator decision (if required)	17 May 2010
Implementation	September 2010

Recommendations

13. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on undertaking a public consultation on a proposal to close Archers Court Maths and Computing College to be replaced with a government funded Academy.

Martyn Doole
Area Children's Services Officer
Thanet & Dover
(01227) 284407

The Local Member is Mr Bryan Cope

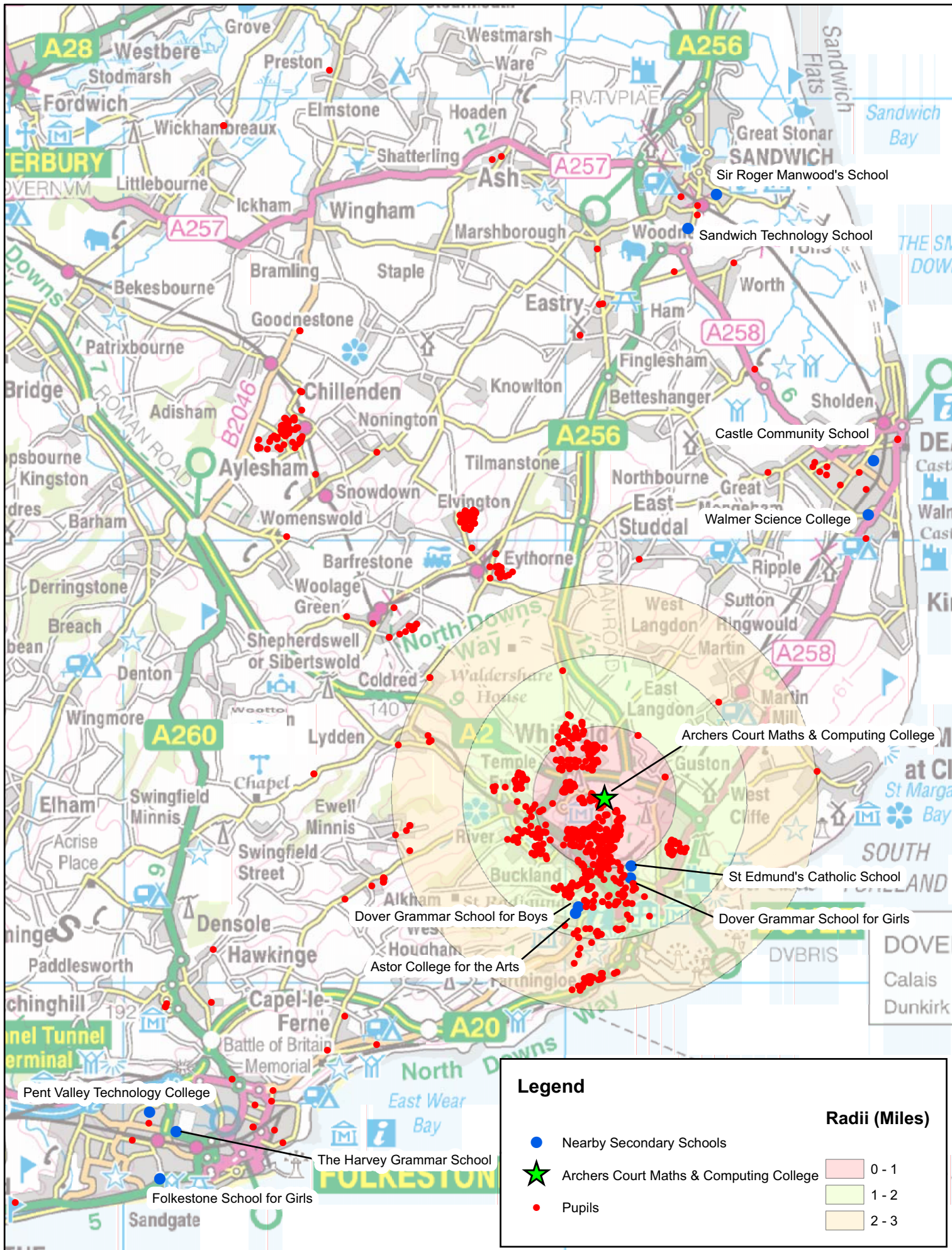
Background Documents:

None

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Pupil Dot Map of Archers Court Maths & Computing College

Appendix 1



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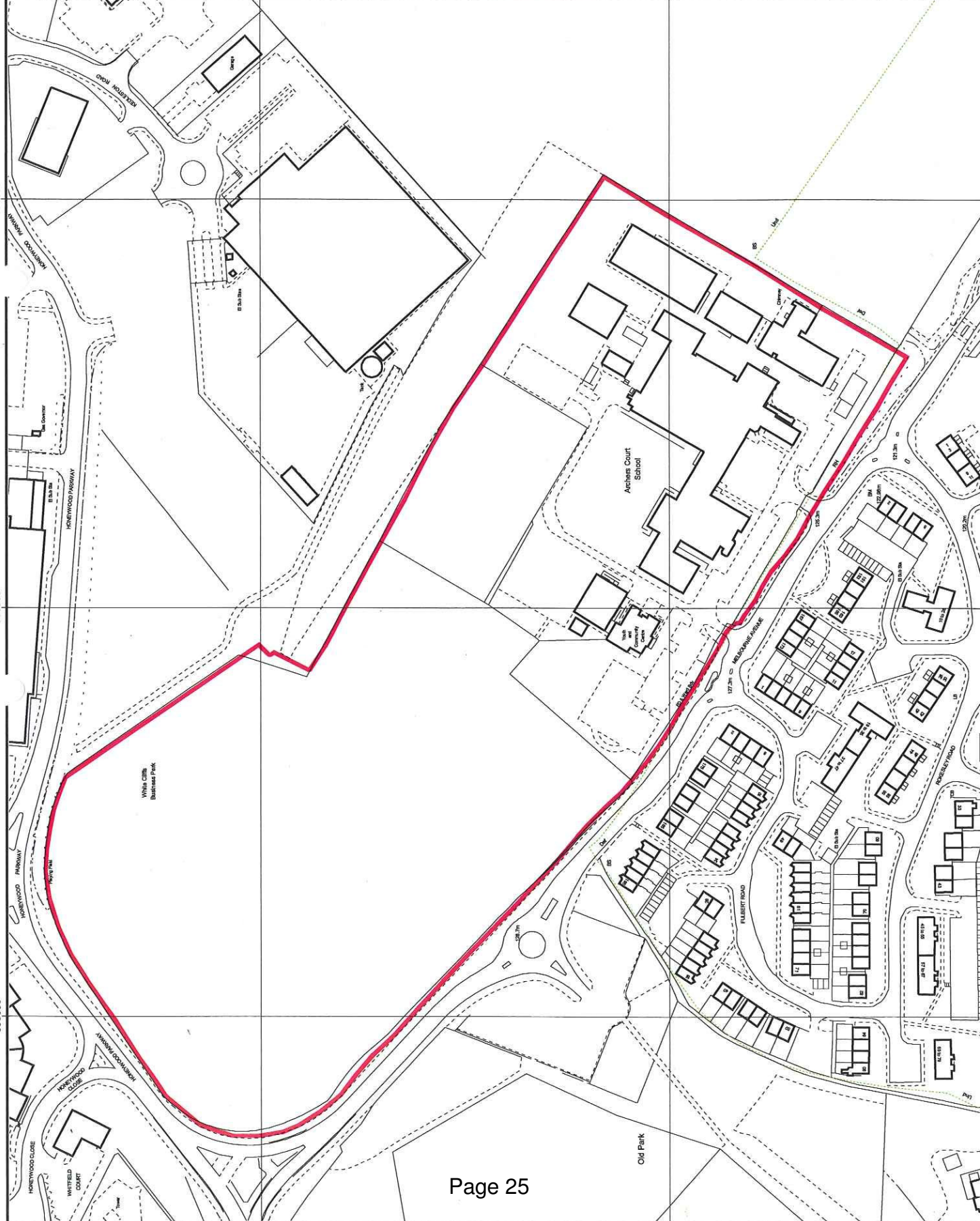
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By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 8 October 2009

Subject: THE FUTURE OF HIGH SCHOOL PROVISION IN DEAL

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the need for a public consultation on the future of High School provision in the Deal area.

Introduction

1. (1) There are currently two High Schools located in Deal which serve principally the Deal and Walmer communities. Castle Community College and Walmer Science College have a common catchment area, although the schools themselves are located 1.18 miles from each other in Deal and Walmer respectively (see Appendices 1 and 2).

(2) The prospect of falling secondary school rolls across the area over the next few years poses a significant challenge to the viability of the two schools as separate stand-alone institutions. In January 2009 Castle Community College had 533 students at 11-16 with a sixth form of 128. Walmer Science College had 671 at 11-16 with a sixth form of 125. By January 2018 with the impact of falling secondary school rolls, these numbers are predicted to fall, with Castle forecast to have 478 at 11-16 and 92 in the 6th Form, and Walmer 509 at 11-16 and a 6th form of 100.

(3) Secondary schools of less than 4 forms of entry (600 students at 11 – 16) face considerable challenges in delivering a broad and balanced curriculum which offers optimum student choice and diversity while making cost effective use of resources.

(4) Schools in the Dover District, including those in Deal and Walmer, stand to benefit from substantial capital investment through Wave 5 of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. In order to secure optimum capital investment which will benefit all students, the Local Authority is required to consider cost effective school organisation solutions which will improve education outcomes, secure viable long term provision and make best use of available resources.

Background

2. (1) Both Walmer Science College and Castle Community College are good schools which serve their communities well. The challenge is to secure viable long term provision which will enable standards to be maintained and improved against a background of falling rolls with consequential reductions in student numbers, funding and staffing if action is not taken now.

(2) Walmer Science College was last inspected in November 2007. It was judged “a good school with some outstanding features.” “All aspects of the school’s provision are improving rapidly.” “Students achieve well throughout the school. Standards are below national averages, but students make faster progress than in most other schools.” Walmer Science College achieved 36% 5 A* – C, including English and mathematics in 2008 and 37% 5 A* - C, including English and mathematics in 2009.

(3) Castle Community College was last inspected in November 2007. It was judged “an outstanding school....students make excellent progress in their studies.” “Students enter the school with well below average standards”.. but leave with “a well above average percentage of 5 A*-C grades.” “The compulsory vocational courses in Year 10 and 11 contribute to the school’s success. The curriculum is outstanding as it is relevant to students’ interests and, in the light of job opportunities, to their future training and education.” Although technically a National Challenge School, Castle Community College achieved 33% 5 A* - C, including English and mathematics in 2008 and 33.3% 5 A* - C, including English and mathematics in 2009.

(4) Standards at both schools are potentially in jeopardy over the medium-long term if action is not taken to address the issue of falling rolls. Forecasts based on actual roll data for January 2009, suggest that by 2018/19, (the end of the current BSF planning time frame) both schools would be operating well below 4 FE. Inevitably this would be likely to pose financial, organisational and curriculum pressures, constraining the educational offer to students. In addition the Local Authority is unlikely to secure optimum capital investment in two separate institutions which serve the same community and which between them have a school population at 11 – 16 of less than 1000 pupils.

The Proposal

3. (1) To undertake a public consultation on the future of High School provision in Deal. This would include, effectively, the amalgamation of Castle Community College and Walmer Science College by closing the existing two schools and establishing a new successor school, if possible in September 2010. All students who are attending the two predecessor schools at the point at which the new school is established would be guaranteed a place at the new school should they need one.

(2) The new school could be established either as a Trust school working with an external partner(s) to raise standards or by means of a competition. The governing bodies of Castle Community College and Walmer Science College have indicated that they wish to explore the possibility of setting up a Trust School. If the Local Authority supports such a proposal an application could be made by the putative trust to the Secretary of State for exemption from the competition requirement, in which case the Local Authority could agree and implement the proposal. There would still be consultation on the proposal but a decision could be secured more quickly than via the competition route. The timescales for each route are shown at Appendix 3.

(3) In coming to a decision the Secretary of state will consider:

- Existing range of local provision – types of schools, size, specialisms etc
- Local standards
- Whether there is an urgent need for the new school
- Parental preferences

(4) The Local authority itself could apply to the Secretary of State for exemption from the competition requirement under Section 10 of the Education and

Inspections Act 2006 (see Appendix 4). However, there is a presumption against the establishment of new Community Schools, without a competition process and such an exemption is unlikely to be granted.

Site Issues

4. (1) The Castle Community College site is larger than the Walmer Science College site and already has significant community use. The proposed site for a new successor school is therefore the Castle Community College site which would be substantially redeveloped with a significant new build, through the BSF programme.

(2) Walmer Science College has some good quality new building stock as well as other less suitable accommodation. Subject to the outcome of the consultation and decisions yet to be taken by elected members, part of the Walmer Science College site could be retained for development as a vocational centre for all schools in the Dover District, while some of the site could be declared surplus. This would form an aspect for future consultations *but* no decisions have yet been taken.

(3) The proposal envisages the potential establishment of a new Foundation Trust school in advance of the development of the Castle site. It is currently envisaged that BSF would deliver new accommodation by 2013. Until that time the new Trust school, if Trust Status is approved by KCC and the DCSF, would operate under a single leadership and governance regime but on the two existing sites.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

5. (1) A new school of 7FE would achieve long term viability in terms of revenue funding. Consolidation of High School provision in Deal onto a single site would enable the Local authority to make optimum cost effective use of available resources and maximise capital investment in new school infrastructure, providing a first class learning environment for all students.

Human

(2) A new trust school would require the establishment of a single governing body and the appointment of a single headteacher to lead the school. Recruitment to the post of headteacher would require a competitive recruitment process and national advertisement.

(3) There would be some efficiencies arising from consolidation on a single site but it is not possible to quantify these at the current time. Falling rolls poses a significant risk to jobs. Amalgamation offers the potential to align staffing establishment with pupil numbers in a coherent and managed way.

(4) Staff employed by each of the two predecessor schools at the point at which the new trust school comes into being would be entitled to transfer to the new school via TUPE arrangements.

Views of the Local Members

6. (1) The Local Members are Mr Kit Smith and Mrs Julie Rook whose views are as follows:

Mrs Julie Rook

“I fully support the amalgamation of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College. Both boards of governors meet regularly and have been working together already for many years to deliver shared Post 16 education across both sites and can both see the value of a full merger. Neither school will be able to survive falling rolls and the Castle Community College building has little life left, so will, in the near future, require massive investment. Both schools are performing very well, but amalgamation will improve sharing of best practices and cost savings through economies of scale as well as further raised academic standards across the board as the school will aim to excel. Pupils will also be taught in a state of the art building giving young people the pride and aspiration that will improve the overall educational offer. The plan also for a vocational provision on the Walmer site is to be welcomed. Walmer College is the perfect site for a broad educational offer including vocational provision and possibly adult education as Deal simply does not currently have these facilities, and young people find themselves having to travel out of town to Dover, Folkestone, Ashford and Canterbury to further their education. Deal is a large town in its own right with over 30,000 people. Having to travel many miles to access Post 16 education is totally unacceptable and as Walmer station is so very close to the current Walmer site, developing the potential of the site would attract people in from outlying villages and towns. Being the Kent County Councillor for the division of Deal, I of course want the best for Deal, and believe that this project will not only meet my aspiration and that of the community, but also the aspiration of Kent County Council who I believe also want to deliver the very best education they possibly can, making our local school the number one choice for local people. The people of Deal need to have access to a broad range of educational provision at 11-18 and beyond, providing the educational attainment skills and training to keep local people in local jobs. It will bring business and money into the town and into the wider district and would most definitely put Deal on the map. I do however realise that there may be differing views on this proposed amalgamation and wholly approve of the Council seeking to consult.”

Mr Kit Smith

“I have heard the well argued and what would appear to be a logical case for the proposal to amalgamate Walmer Science College and Castle Community College. However, it is essential that there is ample opportunity for a wide and genuine consultation on the proposals, as there are almost certainly valid and differing views and arguments that must be considered. I approve of the proposed consultation.”

Views of the Governing Body

7. Both governing bodies have resolved to explore the implications of establishing a Trust school, working with the Local Authority and external partners to address future challenges. They will submit a formal view as part of the consultation process.

Views of the Local Children’s Services Partnership Board

8. The Partnership Board has been briefed on the proposal and recognises the issues facing secondary school organisation in Deal in the near future. The Board welcomes the opportunity for consultation.

School Improvement Implications

9. Allowing the roll of both schools to decline significantly would threaten the viability of both institutions which would make it difficult to maintain standards as pupil numbers, funding and staffing levels diminish. The establishment of a new Trust School would potentially engage the support of one or more external partners in working with governors and staff of the new school to raise standards.

Equality Issues

10. A new school would serve the same catchment as the two exiting institutions and would continue to provide high quality non – selective education for its students. Given the nature of the proposal and the profile of the two existing schools, there are no adverse implications for any minority groups distinguishable by race, gender, ethnicity, disability, religious conviction, social, economic backgrounds or sexual orientation.

Transport & Environmental Impact, Including Community Implications

11. The establishment of one larger school based on one site in place of two schools in separate locations will result in a significant reduction in school related traffic in the Walmer area. There will be an increase in traffic in the Mill Hill area of Deal, and a new Travel Plan will need to be agreed in consultation with Transport.

Proposed Timetable

12. The timetable will depend on whether or not the two governing bodies working with an external partner(s) decide to submit a proposal for Foundation Trust status, whether or not the Secretary of State grants exemption from competition for a proposal for a new Trust School initiated by both governing bodies and whether or not the Cabinet Member decides to support a Trust School proposal or prefers to initiate a competition to establish the new school. Appendix 3 outlines the possible timelines for all scenarios.

Recommendations

13. That a public consultation is undertaken to seek views on the future of High School provision in the Deal area.

Martyn Doole
Area Children's Services Officer
Dover & Thanet
01227 284407

The Local Members are:

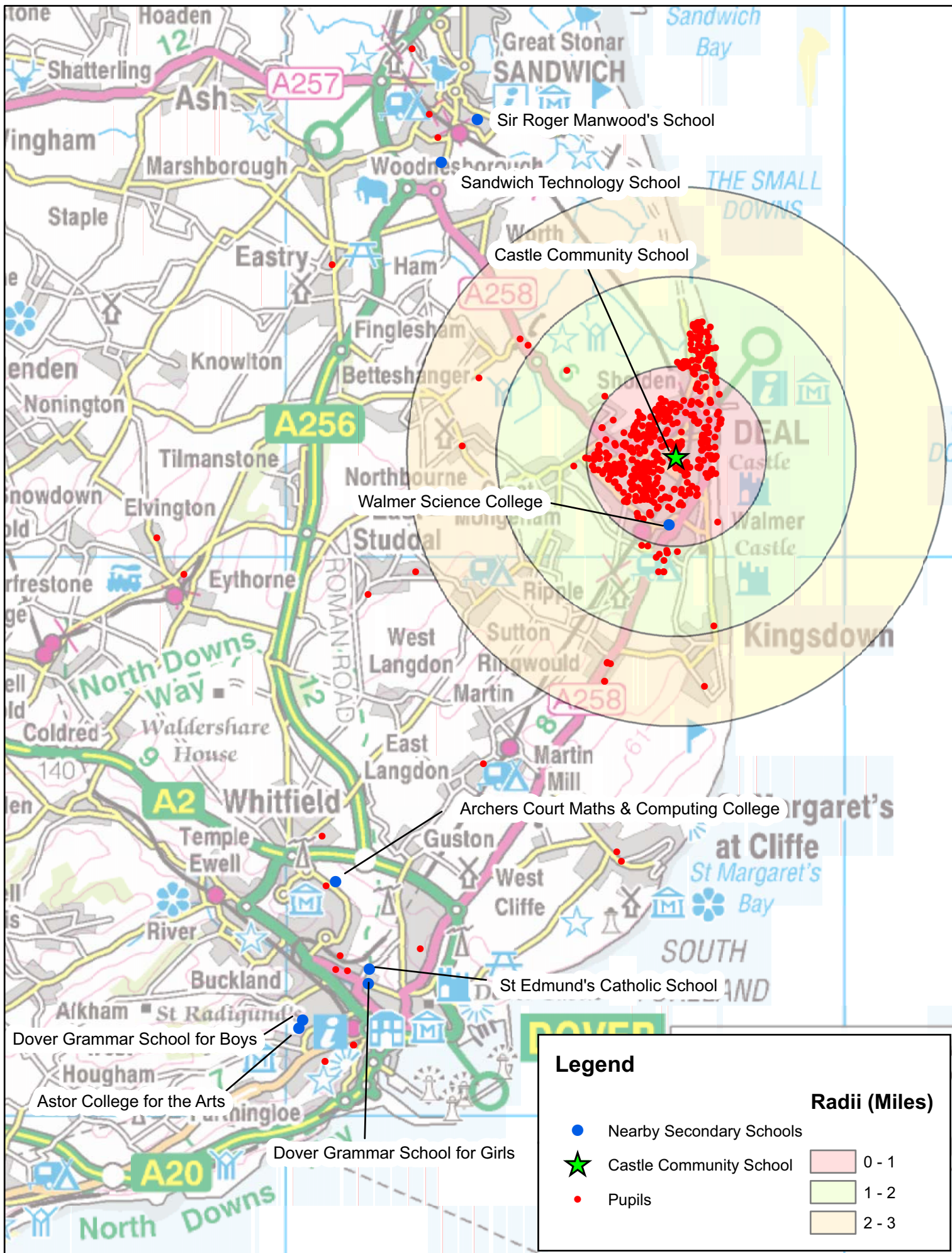
Mrs Julie Rook and Mr Kit Smith

Background Documents:

None

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Pupil Dot Map of Castle Community School

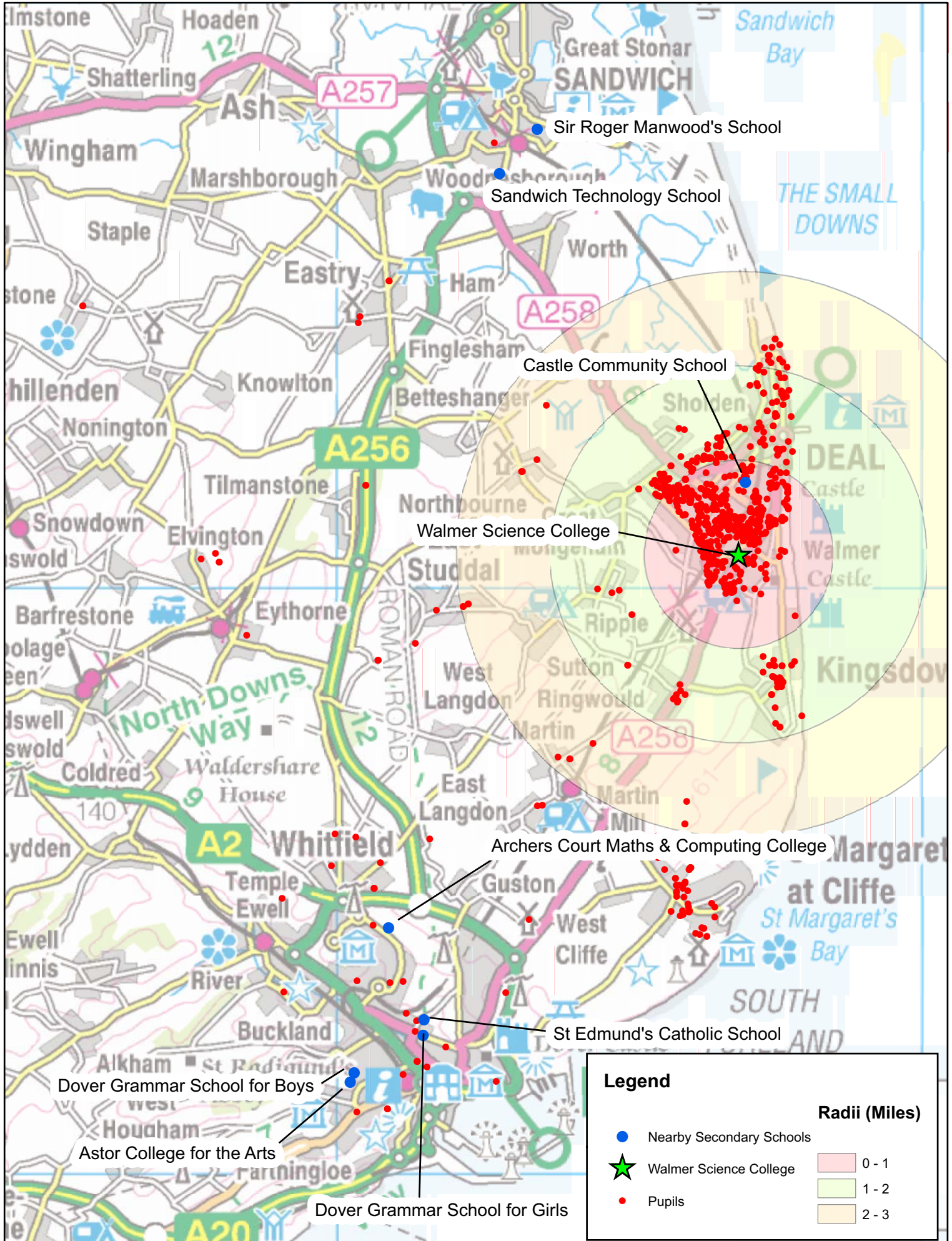


GH - Ad Hoc 10772

Please note there are 10 pupils not shown on this map. These pupils are located in Herne Bay, Canterbury Aylesham, Birchington, Margate (1 each), Faversham (2) and Ramsgate (3)

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Possible timelines for the proposed amalgamation of Walmer Science College & Castle Community College

SOAB 1 meeting	8 October 2009			
Consultation period	2 November to 14 December 2009			
Public meetings	Week commencing 19 November			
SOAB Briefing	24 November 2009			
Governors apply for exemption	4 January 2010			
SOAB 2 meeting	7 January 2010			
Cabinet Member decision to support Trust School proposal or initiate a competition	February 2010		Issue invitation to bid notice 1 st Public Notice	25 February 2010
Exemption granted or rejected	15 February 2010	Rejected	Public notice expires	25 June 2010
		Granted and approved by Cabinet Member		
Proposed consultation period	22 February to 6 April 2010		Issue 2 nd Public Notice and closure notice	15 July 2010
Proposer publishes public notice to establish new school and LA publishes closure notice	22 April 2010		Public meeting	20 July 2010
Public Notices expires	3 June 2010		Public Notice expires	25 August 2010
Cabinet Member decision on proposal and closures	14 June 2010		Refer to Adjudicator for a decision if LA has submitted a proposal	by 8 September 2010
			Adjudicator decision	November 2010
Implementation	September 2010		Implementation	September 2011
New Buildings available on Castle site	By September 2013			

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