



AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, 3rd December, 2009, at 10.30 am Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen Mannering**

**Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**

Telephone **(01622)
694289/694367**

Tea/Coffee will be available from 10.15am in 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 - 4 November 2009 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. School Organisation - School Improvement Models (Pages 5 - 14)
5. Proposed Closure of Archers Court Maths and Computing College (Dover) and its replacement with a Government Funded Academy (Pages 15 - 22)

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, 25 November 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 Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 4 November 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr C J Capon, Miss S J Carey, Mr P J Homewood, Mrs E M Tweed (Substitute) (Substitute for Mr M J Northey) and Mr M J Vye

Also Present: Mr G Cooke

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

5. Minutes - 8 October 2009

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2009 be agreed as a true record.

6. Proposal to Re-designate Foxwood School as a School for Profound and Severe Learning Needs and Highview School as a School for Complex Learning Needs; Relocate both Schools on to the site of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College; and remove the Boarding Provision at Foxwood School

(Item 4 - Report by Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education)

(1) Before the commencement of discussion on this item, Ms S Carey and Mr C Capon indicated that they would speak to this item as Local Members and would therefore abstain from voting on the recommendation.

(2) This report sought the views of the Advisory Board on undertaking a public consultation to relocate and designate Foxwood and Highview Schools and to remove the boarding provision from Foxwood School.

(3) Mr Adams introduced this matter by highlighting the key issues relating to these proposals as detailed in the report. During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of points of detail to which Mr Adams responded accordingly.

(4) Speaking as a Local Member, Ms Carey said that whilst she supported the undertaking of a public consultation, she did have concerns that the proposal would increase the traffic flows in and around the Brockhill site and therefore asked that appropriate measures be taken in order to reduce this. Mr Adams said that the traffic

situation in and around the Brockhill site would be investigated as part of the overall proposal. However as the numbers attending the Brockhill School were currently reducing, he believed that would offset any possible increase in the traffic numbers which may come about as a result of the proposal. Mr Capon as a local Member said that he supported the proposals but that he had been approached by parents from Nonnington who had said that they were not aware of these proposals. Mr Adams said that he would look into that and confirmed parents would be formally consulted on these proposals, including parents with children at Nonnington.

(5) Following further discussion, the Advisory Board resolved to recommend that a public consultation be undertaken on the proposal to re-designate Foxwood School as a school for profound and severe learning needs and Highview School as a school for complex learning needs and to relocate both schools onto the site of the Brockhill Park Performing Arts College; and remove the boarding provision at Foxwood School.

7. The Proposed Relocation of Laleham Gap (Community Special) School

(Item 5 - Report by Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education)

(1) This report proposed the relocation of Laleham Gap (Community Special) School, Margate to a site at Pysons Road, Broadstairs adjacent to the new Ellington and Hereson School in a new building to be provided through Building Schools for the Future Funding. The report also sought the views of the Advisory Board on undertaking a public consultation on the possible relocation of the school.

(2) Mr Doole introduced this report by highlighting the key elements of the proposal and said that the Building Schools for the Future Programme would enable the complete re-building of the school to a design of the highest quality. The proposal would also mean that the school could be consolidated onto a single site with enhanced opportunities for cross-phase association, more efficient timetabling and access to state of the art facilities. Mr Doole also reported the views from Mr Wells and Mr Jarvis as Local Members. Mr Wells supported the proposals but had said that the footpath running through the site was in need of refurbishment. Mr Wells believed the proposal was sensible and would ensure the benefits of new build were brought to an excellent special school. Mr Jarvis also supported the recommendations.

(3) During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of points of details to which Mr Doole replied accordingly.

(4) Following further discussion, the Advisory Board agreed that a public consultation should be undertaken on the possible relocation of Laleham Gap Special School from its existing split locations in Margate and Broadstairs to the site in Pysons Road, Broadstairs adjacent to the new Ellington and Hereson School.

8. Proposed Change of Age Range for Aylesham (Community) Primary School (from 3 - 11 years to 4 - 11 years) and the Closure of the Maintained Nursery Unit

(Item 6 - Report by Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education)

(1) This report explained the need to consider a proposal to close the maintained nursery at Aylesham Primary School and to change the age range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 1 September 2010. Mr Doole introduced the report by highlighting the key elements of the proposals which would give more flexibility to tailor services to meet the needs of parents/carers in the Aylesham community. If the maintained nursery was to close, all the nursery education funding payments would be made to the Neighbourhood Nursery and all the finances would be under the control of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. That would have a significant beneficial impact on the Neighbourhood Nursery's long term sustainability. The proposal offered seamless continuity of service and the Pre-School Learning Alliance would continue its commitment to working in partnership with the school to help monitor quality and delivery of the Early Year's Foundation Curriculum. The Neighbourhood Nursery would also continue to be part of the Children's Centre core offer.

(2) During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board raised a number of detailed questions to which Mr Doole responded accordingly.

(3) Following further detailed discussion, the Advisory Board resolved to recommend that a consultation exercise be undertaken on the proposal to change the age range for Aylesham (Community) Primary School by closing the maintained nursery class.

9. Proposal to Expand the John Wesley School from 210 Places to 420 Places

(Item 7- Report by Ms Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education)

(1) Before the commencement of discussion on this item, Mrs E Tweed indicated that she would speak as the Local Member and would therefore abstain from voting on the recommendation.

(1) This report proposed the expansion of the John Wesley School by one form of entry bringing the total capacity to 420 places, with up to 60 places per year group. The expansion of the school would be gradual with additional places being created annually to accommodate reception aged pupils only, and therefore taking seven years for the school to grow to its full size. Under the proposal the first two form entry intake was proposed for September 2010.

(2) Mrs Tweed speaking as a local Member said she supported the proposals but raised some points of detail to which Mr Adams responded accordingly.

(3) Following further discussion, the Advisory Board resolved to recommend that a public consultation be undertaken on the proposal to expand the John Wesley School from 210 to 420 places.

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

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 3 December
2009

Subject: SCHOOL ORGANISATION - SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
MODELS

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out different type of school
organisations in Kent and the new models being
introduced to support school improvement. The School
Organisation Advisory Board is asked to note the
report.

Introduction

1. Attached to this brief report is an Annex detailing the role of SOAB, school types and the new models of school organisation which are intended to help raise standards in schools. The purpose of the paper is to support members through the school organisation process.

Recommendation

2. Members of the board are asked to Note the report

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Background Documents:

None

The Role of the School Organisation Advisory Board

As its title suggests the role of the School Organisation Advisory Board is to advise Cabinet, and in particular the Cabinet Portfolio holder for Children, Families and Education on matters related to school organisation.

The Board normally meets monthly (except for August) and provides a forum where matters of both local and county wide importance related to school organisation can be publicly debated. All meetings of the Board are open to the press and public and they are also web cast. Following the consideration of a matter the views of the Board are passed to the Cabinet Portfolio holder so they can be taken into full account as part of the decision making process.

Many of the matters which come before the Board would have first appeared in the County Council's Forward Plan as they are a 'Key' Decision. The definition of a Key Decision is set out in law and the criteria contains a number of elements. The criteria for a Key Decision is set out in the Council's Constitution and the element which is of most relevance to the work of the Board is:

Major changes in the arrangement for the delivery of services; including changes in the designation of schools.

The responsibilities of the Local Authority

The core role of the Local Authority in terms of School organisation is to secure the supply of school places i.e. to ensure that there is a school place for every child of statutory school age (5 – 16) who needs one. Beyond that the Local Authority is charged with offering diversity and choice. Local Policy and individual circumstances will determine how this is encapsulated within individual proposals to address such issues as selection, single sex teaching, age range, post – 16 provision etc. Clearly we work within the parameters of national legislation. The current legislative framework is largely derived from the 1998 schools Standard and Framework Act as modified in subsequent Education Acts in 2002, 2005 and 2006.

The role of the Area Children's Services Officers (ACSOs)

In Kent the school organisation function of the Local Authority is discharged at officer level, principally by the ACSOs, who each cover two District or Borough Council areas.

The ACSOs are responsible for developing proposals to:

- remove excess surplus capacity or develop additional school capacity thereby ensuring an appropriate but not excessive supply of school places;
- developing reorganisation proposals to inform the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme;

- addressing the potential non - viability of small schools;
- developing 'Structural Solutions' for Secondary schools in response to the government's National Challenge agenda;
- addressing significant and sustained underperformance through school reorganisation where appropriate;
- developing proposals for the relocation of schools from one site to another;
- changing the character (by gender, age range or size) of individual schools.
- managing on behalf of the Local Authority any competition processes for the establishment of new schools.

As well as developing proposals for consideration by the Managing Director and elected Members, ACSOs are also responsible for organising statutory consultation processes and associated public meetings, where they will present and explain consultation proposals.

Types of School Provision

Community

Community schools are wholly owned and maintained by the Local Authority and set up to serve the needs of the local community. The Local Authority employs the staff, owns the school's land and buildings and as the admission authority has the primary responsibility for deciding the arrangements for admitting pupils.

Voluntary Controlled (VC)

Schools in this category were established by a foundation, usually a church. They provide the same range of education as Community schools but also reflect the ethos of the foundation that established them. The premises are held on trust by the foundation and the Local Authority employs the staff and is the admissions authority.

Voluntary Aided (VA)

These schools were also established by a foundation, often a church. They provide the same range of education as Community schools but reflect the ethos or religious nature of the foundation that established them. The governing body is the admission authority and publishes its own admissions policy. Given the denominational nature of these schools, children may come from a wider area than the immediate local community. The premises of the school are held on trust by the foundation. The governing body has additional

responsibilities for the upkeep of the buildings and employs the staff of the school, both teaching and non-teaching.

Foundation

When Grant Maintained status was abolished by The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Grant Maintained schools were given the option to become either Foundation or Community schools. Most opted for Foundation status. Subsequently other schools have been granted Foundation status which can be secured through a simple consultation/application process. As Foundation schools, the governing body is the employer and the admissions authority. Foundation Schools own their own land and buildings, manage their assets and may establish or join charitable foundations to engage with outside partners. Foundation schools are slightly more independent from the Local Authority than Community schools but the relationship with the Local Authority is broadly similar and the Local Authority has powers of intervention as with Community schools.

Trust (A foundation school with a foundation)

Any maintained school can become a Trust school – primary, secondary and special schools. A Trust school is a state-funded Foundation school supported by a charitable trust. It is made up of the school and external partner(s) working together for the benefit of the school. It manages its own assets, employs its own staff and sets its own admission arrangements. A school can choose which partners to work with – for example, businesses, business foundations, colleges, universities or community groups. Increasingly central government is encouraging secondary schools to apply for Trust school status.

National Challenge Trust Schools

National Challenge Trust schools can be established by local authorities where a school is deemed to be unable to reach the minimum target of 30% 5A*-C and above including English and Maths by 2011 and to sustain and improve attainment levels thereafter. The Local Authority can apply to the Secretary of State for an existing Community, Foundation, Aided or Controlled school to become a National Challenge Trust school which must forge new improvement partnerships led by high performing educational partner. The aim is to give the school and the community a fresh beginning and a break with previous underachievement. The establishment of a new National Challenge Trust School has to have the approval of the DCSF. Competition is not required and exemption will be agreed automatically. National Challenge Trust School status attracts substantial extra funding from the DCSF to support rapid school improvement.

Academies

Academies are wide-ability, state-funded schools established and managed by sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds, including high performing schools and colleges, universities, individual philanthropists, business, the

voluntary sector and the faith communities as well as local authorities . Academies are not maintained by the Local Authority but are funded directly by central government. Academies are bound by the same School Admissions Code, SEN Code of Practice and exclusions guidance as all other state-funded schools.

Academies are more autonomous than other maintained schools and the Local Authority's powers of intervention are more limited. Academies also have greater flexibility in the way they operate, for example in terms of teachers' contracts, the organisation of the school day and the curriculum offer.

In Kent academies are encouraged to collaborate and co-operate with the wider community of schools and the Local Children Services Partnerships.

Federations

A federation is established where two or more schools agree to enter into a formal association to work together on a shared agenda. This can involve the establishment of a single governing body and single point of leadership for all schools across the federation – usually called an Executive Head teacher. When a single governing body is established the federation is usually referred to as a 'hard' federation.

Other forms of federation may stop short of unified leadership and governance but could involve an agreement to collaborate to form a Joint Committee to make decisions on their behalf. These kind of arrangements are sometimes referred to as 'soft' federations or formal collaborations.

The establishment of a federation is governed by Statutory Guidance and Regulations. Schools themselves are responsible for developing federation proposals (although the Local Authority may encourage them to do so). Typically it can take about 3 – 4 months to establish a federation. The statutory consultation period is only 6 weeks. Schools organise and run the consultation process themselves.

Federations can be single phase or cross phase. They usually involve a stronger school linking with a weaker school in an attempt to raise standards and allow both schools to benefit from strong leadership and governance. Usually a federation will be led by an Executive Headteacher with each school managed on a day to day basis by a Head of School, although there are other less common models of leadership.

The Local Authority has the right to be consulted by schools who are considering federation but we do not have a veto unless the school is in an Ofsted category. Federations have been identified as a so – called 'Structural Solutions by the DCSF as a possible response to National Challenge. If the Local Authority takes the view that a National Challenge school cannot achieve and sustain 30% 5 A* - C, it can require a National Challenge school to federate with a strong, high performing school if it feels that this is the best way of securing the requisite level of attainment.

Federations may, in some circumstances, offer a solution to the shortage of high quality applications for headship, especially in the primary phase. A table summarising Kent primary, secondary, special schools and Pupil Referral Units by district and status is attached as appendix 1.

Competition for New Schools

The Education and Inspections Act in 2006 built on the provisions of previous Education Acts in 2002 and 2005.

Under this legislation local authorities lose their dominance over the decision to initiate change. The desire for any organised group to promote new school provision or parental dissatisfaction with the status quo can trigger a competition and attract the necessary resources to bring about change whether or not there is an objective need to expand or contract existing provision.

Proposals to establish a new school will trigger the requirements for a public competition to decide the character and promoter/operator of any new school unless the Secretary of State approves an application from a promoter to publish proposals without a competition process. In all cases whether the process has been initiated by the Local Authority or triggered by a group of parents, the Local Authority will have the power to define the broad specification for new provision and the duty to secure appropriate premises and funding.

If the Local Authority is not involved in any of the proposals it can judge the competition, otherwise the independent schools Adjudicator will determine the proposal.

Given the extended requirements for consultation under the competition regulations, it takes typically about 18 months to run a competition process from start to finish. This takes account of intervening school holidays and the need to hit our own internal deadlines for meetings and the production of reports etc.

The Local Authority has experience of running a new school competition to establish a new school from the amalgamation of Ellington and The Hereson Schools in Ramsgate, w.e.f. September 2009 and opening a primary school in Ashford w.e.f 1 September 2012.

Martyn Doole
Area Children's Services Officer
Thanet and Dover

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SUMMARY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENT

Primary Schools by District and Status - as at September 2009						
District	Community	Foundation	Trust	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Grand Total
Ashford	21	1		6	12	40
Canterbury	17	2	1	6	11	37
Dartford	20	1		4	3	28
Dover	24			8	9	41
Gravesham	21			4	2	27
Maidstone	31	2		5	10	48
Sevenoaks	19	2		11	10	42
Shepway	11	3		7	14	35
Swale	31	1		9	8	49
Thanet	18			6	7	31
Tonbridge & Malling	24	2		6	10	42
Tunbridge Wells	10			8	13	31
Grand Total	247	14	1	80	109	451

Secondary Schools by District and Status - as at September 2009							
District	Community	Foundation	Trust	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Academy	Grand Total
Ashford	3	1		1	1		6
Canterbury	1	5	1	1	1	1	10
Dartford	3	4				2	9
Dover	5	3		1			9
Gravesham	1	5		2			8
Maidstone	2	5		1	1	2	11
Sevenoaks	2	2					4
Shepway	1	2	1			2	6
Swale	2	5				1	8
Thanet	2	5	1	1		1	10
Tonbridge & Malling		7	2	1			10
Tunbridge Wells	1	3		4		1	9
Grand Total	23	47	5	12	3	10	100

**Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units
(PRU's) as at September 2009**

District of schools	Number of schools	Number of PRU's
Ashford	2	2
Canterbury	2	3
Dartford	2	2
Dover	2	0
Gravesham	1	2
Maidstone	2	3
Sevenoaks	2	1
Shepway	2	2
Swale	1	1
Thanet	4	2
Tonbridge & Malling	2	0
Tunbridge Wells	2	2
Grand Total	24	20

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

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 3 December 2009

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

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to close Archers Court Maths & Computing College so that it may be replaced with a government funded academy. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice.

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

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.

(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.

(3) 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

2. (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 are consulting on the establishment of the new academy, which is

taking place 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-educational, 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. The new academy would therefore continue to meet the specialist needs of students with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs, offering practical opportunities for inclusion within the mainstream setting, according to individual needs.

The Consultation

3. (1) The consultation document was distributed to staff, governors and parents at the school, County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, local libraries, the District Council and others in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website and the link to the website widely circulated via email.

(2) Approximately 1800 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. A copy is attached as Appendix 1.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) Details of the number of responses will be tabled at the meeting on 3 December.

(2) Responses received so far have indicated support for the proposal. A final summary of responses received will be tabled at the meeting.

Public Meeting Responses

(3) A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting is attached as Appendix 2.

Views of Local Member

5. Mr Cope is supportive of the proposal to replace Archers Court Maths & Computing College with a government funded academy. He hopes that this proposal will help to improve standards, and feels that with Christ Church University as the main sponsor the students will have the opportunity for a more complete educational experience which will also help to enhance the opportunities for their future careers.

Views of Local Member of Parliament

6. (1) The following has been received from Mr Gwyn Prosser, MP for Dover and Deal

(2) Whilst I have certain reservations about the creation of academies, mostly in relation to the influence that some types of sponsors could bring to bear on the curriculum, I am pleased to confirm my support regarding the particular proposals in respect of Archers Court.

(3) Archers Court Maths and Computing College has made significant progress under the enthusiastic leadership of Elaine Hamilton and her team. However, Kent's selection system predicates against schools like Archer's Court rising above a certain level, especially when situated in areas like Buckland and I believe the pupils will benefit greatly from the boost they will obtain by becoming part of a new academy.

(4) Academy status will allow new additional Government funding, support from the sponsors and provide the opportunity for a new start and everyone I've talked to has been supportive of the move.

(5) With careful planning the change does not need to cause disruption to pupils' studies and although it may be outside the consultation remit, I'd like to put on record my hope that Elaine Hamilton and her staff will be able to enjoy the fruits of their labours by being re-employed by the new academy.

Views of Dover District Council

7. Paul Watkins, leader of Dover District Council, has indicated support for the proposal.

Views of the Learning and Skills Council

8. The Learning and Skills Council supports the proposal.

Views of the Governing Body

9. The Governing Body has been involved in discussions about the future of the school, and is fully supportive of the proposal.

Views of the Partnership Board

10. The Partnership has been consulted and involved in discussions which resulted in the current proposal being formulated.

Views of the Area Children's Services Officer

11. The establishment of a new academy would bring long term educational benefits for local learners. The new academy would have the organisational flexibility to operate according to local needs and circumstances. The ability to cater for the full ability range would also enhance the schools capacity to achieve and sustain significant increases in attainment levels, taking the school out of National Challenge.

The mix of sponsors supporting and driving sustainable improvement within a first class learning environment offers the prospect of durable, transformational change which will create a successful and popular learning community, improving the learning experience for young people, locally.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

12. (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. However, the Local Authority is required to incur some development costs, which are likely to be in the region of 3% of the capital investment.

(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.

Proposed Timetable

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

Cabinet Member decision (to issue a public notice)	beginning of January 2010
Public Notice period	14 January to 25 February 2010
Decision by Local Authority	5 March 2010 (approx)
Adjudication (if required)	April/May 2010
Implementation	September 2010

Recommendation

14. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:

- (a) the closure of Archers Court Maths & Computing College, and;
- (b) if agreed, the issuing of a public notice to close the school so that it may be replaced by a government funded academy.

Martyn Doole
Area Children's Services Officer
Dover & Thanet
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Martyn.doole@kent.gov.uk

The Local Member is Mr Bryan Cope

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board - 8 October 2009

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

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 3 November 2009

33 people attended the public meeting including parents, governors and other interested parties.

Martyn Doole the Area Childrens Services Officer outlined the background to the proposal, the options open to the Local Authority, the reasons why this particular proposal is being considered and the benefits accruing from the change to Academy status. He explained that the main driver for a 'structural solution' was the need to ensure that the school achieved a least 30% 5 A*-C grades at GCSE level including English and Maths.

With Canterbury Christ Church University as the main sponsor, the new school would have the backing of a nationally recognised educational institution, which coupled with new state of the art buildings would provide Dover with a first class school.

Sue Piotrowsky the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Christ Church University explained that heretofore the university had turned down all previous approaches to sponsor an Academy. They have agreed to be the main sponsor of this proposal as it will be an opportunity to have a brand new school with 21st Century state of the art facilities and provide a high quality inspirational learning experience for the children of Dover. It is the intention to build on the existing strengths of Archers Court. They would propose a new name "Dover Christ Church Academy".

Elaine Hamilton the headteacher of Archers Court Maths & Computing College said that Archers Court was recognised by Ofsted as a good school. It is the highest rated non-selective school in the Dover District. Results have doubled and they will achieve 30% including English and Maths at GCSE in 2010. 'A' level results have improved by 18% this year with 63% of the students taking A Levels achieving A, B or C grades. Attendance has improved and now stands at 94%. The number of pupils with Special Educational needs is increasing and she is concerned that the school is about to reach a plateau where results will not further improve. She is in favour of the establishment of an Academy as the status will bring with it new buildings and funding at a higher rate which would enable an improved learning experience for the children.

Parent – *Many Academies have failed in London – she has concerns that her daughter currently in Year 10 may be disadvantaged during the change.*

Academies have done well in Kent. The buildings are planned for the back of the site and will not impact adversely on pupils during transition.

Parent - *Has a child in Year 11 and a son at University – would like reassurances about post 16. How quickly will co-operation with the grammar schools happen – not sure what the sponsors get out of sponsorship – will there be a concentration on every child and not just the borderline ones – does not like the proposed new name of the academy.*

The plan is for transformation from day 1. The initial 'Expression of Interest' to the DCSF covered many of these points. The sponsors do not get financial gain. They are providing their expertise within the framework of collaboration in the education sector.

Indeed the sponsorship will cost the University a considerable amount. They are providing the DNA of the university, upping the grades and preparing children for employment. The government put strict controls on outcomes. Transition is planned to ensure the needs of pupils continue to be met.

Teacher – *Delighted to see the focus on the community – sad to see the loss of the name.*

Teacher – *Have the primaries been consulted? 48% pass the Kent test in some parts of the county. The pass rate in Dover is 13%. 5 of the 23 feeder schools hit the average targets of attainment. There is a need to involve the community. What % attending Christ Church come from Dover?*

The sponsors have not spoken with the primaries. KCC has sent copies of the consultation document to the Year 6 children in all the primary feeder schools. There are 2 separate consultations – one by KCC on the closure of the existing school, as a precursor to the opening of the Academy, and a separate but parallel consultation by Appleyards on the establishment of the Academy. There is an opportunity for all to contribute to both consultations.

Parent & Governor - *very much a supporter of the existing school – will money be available in the future to support the school? Will the investment be guaranteed?*

Prior to the establishment of the Academy a funding agreement is signed by the Secretary of State, which is the essential guarantee. With Academies being a priority of the current government and the expectation of similar support from any alternative incoming government, the future of the Academy is assured.

Teacher – *What is the structural change for Astor?*

A formal link with the proposed Duke of York Academy will be made.

Teacher – *Children arrive in the school with poor musical abilities. Will the Academy do more than just tinker? Results in some Academies are poor.*

Not all Academies are the same. Christ Church University will not give its name to a declining institution.

John Allison Vice Chair of governors: At the beginning he did ask – why us? However during the many meetings which have taken place prior to the proposal being made he has come to the view that this is the way forward. The involvement of educational heavyweights is a recipe for success.

Teacher – *There is a cap of 150 pupils - will that be sufficient to cope with demand?*

This was not an arbitrary cut, but one commensurate with falling numbers in the area. If numbers do increase then the PAN (Published Admission Number) could be increased.