

By:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills
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To:	Education Cabinet Committee – 19 March 2013
Subject	Decision number: 12/01977/2 Closure of Walmer Science College (Community) from September 2013
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report sets out the responses to the public notice issue for
Recommendations:	<p>The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Note that no statutory objections were received during the public notice period ii) Note the responses received from members of the public and that the Cabinet Member will consider further these responses before considering the proposed decision detailed below <p>The Committee is also asked to consider comment and/or endorse the proposed Cabinet Member Decision to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Closure of Walmer Science College ii) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 21 January 2013, Education Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member that he takes the decision to issue the required statutory public notice to close Walmer Science College (Community) from September 2013. This public notice period has now closed and the Cabinet Member must consider the responses and officer views contained within this report and take a decision as to whether the closure be progressed.

2. Statutory Public Notice

- 2.1 The public notice was published on the 17 January and expired on 28 February 2013

2.2 *Responses to the Statutory Public Notice.*

58 comments were received in support of, and objecting to, the proposal, which the Cabinet Member has considered and will again have regard to before taking his final decision. A petition from the save Walmer Science College was received in response to the public notice, however this was the same petition previously submitted to Kent County Council in response to the public

consultation. Mr Whiting took consideration of the petition before issuing the public notice and will give regard to the petition and the strength of feeling it denotes before taking the final decision.

2.3 Dover District Council provided a response to the public notice expressing its concern over the 'honesty and transparency' of the process raised by the District Councils Scrutiny Board. It should be noted that this Board did not invite the Headteachers or governors of either school or a Kent County Council representative to attend the meeting. The Chair of Governors of Walmer Science College has responded directly to Chairman of the District Council expressing his concern and disappointment that some of the relevant stakeholders were not represented at the meeting and therefore could not provide comprehensive answers to the concerns raised.

3. Further views of the Area Education Officer on consideration of comments received

3.1 The AEO recognises and understands the strength of feeling relating to the proposal to close Walmer Science College however, it is their professional opinion that none of the objections fully address or alter the material facts that led to the original proposal. These material facts are as follows:

- That the current and projected low numbers of secondary pupils make Walmer Science College vulnerable;
- That the predicted pupil numbers would if realised result in a lack of financial viability for Walmer Science College. This would impact on the ability of the college to employ sufficient staff to offer a broad and balanced curriculum and improve educational outcomes for its pupils;
- That Castle Community College has secured government funding as part of the Priority Schools Building programme and will be re-built as a school for 1300 pupils on its current site by 2016.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found at: <http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/WalmerandCastle/consultationHome>

5. Recommendations

The Education Cabinet Committee is asked to

- i) Note that no statutory objections were received during the public notice period
- ii) Note the responses received from members of the public and that the Cabinet Member will consider further these responses before considering the proposed decision detailed below

The Committee is also asked to consider comment and endorse the proposed Cabinet Member Decision to:

- i) Close Walmer Science College
- ii) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any

6. Background Documents (and links to them)

Report to ECC on 12 September 2012 - Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School) and Castle Community College (Academy)

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s33906/Item%20D1%20-%20Approved%20Walmer%20Castle%20Community%20Paper.pdf>

Report to ECC on 21 November - Decision number: 12/01977 - Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School) and Castle Community College (Academy)

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s36658/Item%20B1%20ECC%20Paper%202%20Castle%20Walmer%2021.11.12.pdf>

Decision form signed by Cabinet Member for Education Learning and Skills

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/WalmerandCastle/consultationHome>

Public Notice and Consultation Document

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/WalmerandCastle/consultationHome>

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