

Appendix 6

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS (COMMUNITY) HIGH SCHOOL
TO REPLACE WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY

Summary of points raised during the Public Meeting held on 4 December 2008 at Tunbridge Wells High School

Comment or Question	Response
What if Academy is turned down?	
What will happen to Tunbridge Wells High School if the Academy proposal does not go ahead?	The school will continue and the Local Authority will work with the Governing Body to improve its performance and to support it.
Post of Principal	
Given that the post of Principal is already being advertised, does this not mean that the consultation process is irrelevant as a decision has already been made?	It is common practice for academies to run the appointment process in parallel to the consultancy process in order to ensure that a Principal designate is in post by the time the Academy opens. There are contingencies for the event of the Academy not going ahead.
Concern over Falling Rolls and Staff Retention	
What can be done to attract more students to the school given the falling roll, particularly in the existing buildings?	In the short term, there are plans to improve all areas of the school including the introduction of a new uniform and revised curriculum. In addition, there will be some funding available to refurbish the school before it re-opens as an Academy. In the long term, the opening of the new buildings, from 2012, will provide high quality facilities that will attract parents/carers and students.
Is there anything that can be done to retain existing staff and attract new ones?	New staff will be attracted by the additional resources provided by the Academy, particularly once the new build is completed. There will be significant opportunities for existing staff at the school and meetings are planned with all staff in an effort to retain them and to keep them appraised of the situation
Given that many parents choose to send their children to schools in East Sussex because they prefer a fully comprehensive system, is there not a danger that they will therefore not be attracted to the Academy?	The challenge is to provide a local school 'of choice' providing a high quality education that parents/carers want to send their children to, rather than have them spending over 2 hours a day on travelling to and from schools in East Sussex.
Role of Sponsors	
What will be the role of the Sponsors?	The Sponsors will offer wider opportunities for shared learning for young people, particularly in relation to the Academy's specialisms, and for joint training of staff. There will be opportunities for students to access some of the extra-curricular activities available at The Skinners' School

Exclusion Rates

Concern was expressed that there have sometimes been high rates of exclusions at new academies and was that likely to be the case here?

The Academy will be fully committed to inclusive education and will be a complementary member of the West Kent Learning Federation, signed up to the 'In Year Fair Access' and Managed Moves' protocols.

Dissemination of Information

How will the wider community be informed about the wonderful new opportunities provided by the Academy?

A Communication Strategy has been developed, providing information through a dedicated website, regular newsletters and press releases to the local newspaper. In addition, a series of consultation events are planned for the New Year

Disruption to Existing Students

Concern was raised that existing students would be disrupted by, but not benefit from, the changes proposed

Disruption can and will be kept to a minimum. In addition, all students will benefit from the refurbishment for September 2009.