

By: Peter Sass: Head of Democratic Services
To: Scrutiny Committee – 12 December 2012
Subject: Decision 12/01977 – Call-In
Amalgamation of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College

Summary: Notification of a call-in of decision number 12/01977 was received from Mr L Christie on 4 December 2012. This report sets out Mr Christie's reasons behind the call-in and sets out the options for the Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

- (1) On 12 September 2012 the Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member that a consultation take place regarding the proposals from the governing bodies of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College, together with Kent County Council to bring together the schools to form one secondary school which would be an Academy.
- (2) The proposed decision was considered by the Education Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 21 November 2012 and the Cabinet Committee supported the recommendation that Kent County Council should issue a Public Notice to close Walmer Science College with effect from 31 August 2013 conditional upon the Secretary of State's agreement to the enlargement of Castle Community College. The Committee asked that the Cabinet Member consider actions set out in the decision notice appended to this report.
- (3) The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills signed the decision notice on 3 December 2012.
- (4) In accordance with the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committee, notification was received on the afternoon of 4 December 2012 from Mr L Christie that he wished to call this decision in to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for the following reasons:
 1. At the Education Cabinet Committee meeting on 21 November 2012 when this issue was on the Agenda there were papers handed out at the meeting and some papers only available in the Members' Room which meant Committee Members were not given all the information timeously enough to allow mature consideration of this important Community issue.
 2. No member of the public from the local area was allowed to speak despite the fact that at least 86% of those consulted who responded were opposed to the decision.

3. It is understood that there is strong doubt about the accuracy of the forecast pupil numbers which was not examined in depth by the Cabinet Committee (again because of late papers);
4. There are also questions around the money from Government for the rebuild of Castle College Academy as well as handing over a Community School to an Academy.

2. Witnesses

- (1) Mr M Whiting (Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills) and Mr P Leeson (Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills) have been invited to the meeting to answer Members' questions.
- (2) Whereas the Chairman is minded to invite a representative from the "Save Walmer Science College Group" and Castle Community College to address the Committee, he is of firm opinion that the case for the community would be better represented by the local members for Deal and therefore would strongly encourage Mrs Julie Rook and Mr Kit Smith to attend.

3. Options for the Scrutiny Committee

- (1) The Scrutiny Committee may:
 1. make no comments
 2. express comments but not require reconsideration of the decision
 3. require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending reconsideration of the matter in light of the Committee's comments by whoever took the decision or
 4. require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending consideration of the matter by the full council.