

Appendix 5

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE BRADBOURNE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND THE WILDERNESSE SCHOOL FOR BOYS, SEVENOAKS, TO REPLACE WITH AN ACADEMY Summary of Written Responses at Close of Consultation

	Support Proposal	Against Proposal	Undecided	Total
Parent / Carer	27	82	6	115
Student	2	14	2	18
Member of Staff	5	2	1	8
Governor at School	3	2	0	5
Other Interested Party	28	32	16	76
Total	65	132	25	222

Comments in favour of the Proposal

- A wonderful opportunity for young people in Sevenoaks.
- An exciting, fresh idea for a new 21st century generation that will equip them to be leaders of the future.
- With such partners leading it and the enthusiasm and openness of the people of Sevenoaks, this will be a great asset for the future.
- An Academy in Sevenoaks would provide high quality education at local level.
- Existing arrangements involving long bus journeys hardly accord with principles of the ‘climate change’ agenda advocated by so many.
- If Central Government is ideologically opposed to the creation of more grammar schools, then the new Academy is the best option.
- This proposal will benefit the students at Wildernesse School greatly.
- The proposal is needed in order to provide better support, both teaching and facilities, to students of Wildernesse School.
- Development of an Academy will provide improved facilities which will offer greater opportunities to work in partnership with Sensio Leisure
- A fantastic opportunity not to be missed.
- Academy will be building on the strengths of the predecessor schools
- Improved facilities will enable the ambition that the schools have for their students to be realised
- The fact that it will be supported by Sevenoaks School is excellent
- Bussing children out to neighbouring towns is not good for overall standards of education and results in the children (particularly boys) who are left.
- Focus on Performing Arts and use of learning mentors and specialised literacy teachers have made a huge difference to the confidence and self-esteem of students at Bradbourne and should be integrated in the Academy
- There is much to be said for having a good state school that the whole town can be proud of.

- The Academy route is the best way forward for pupils, staff and the wider community.
- The development of the Academy would provide a better educational base and facilities with wider choice and the opportunity for vocational training.
- Public sports facilities including squash courts at the Wildernessee site should be retained and improved as part of the Academy
- The Academy scheme is ambitious and progressive and has the potential to provide even stronger sporting opportunities for both students and the general public
- The scale of the investment under discussion is impressive and makes a meaningful statement about the importance of educating our young people
- Academy will reduce unnecessary journeys out of Sevenoaks to school
- The realistic way forward for 21st century education in Sevenoaks is to provide state of the art facilities for both girls and boys, thus encouraging parents to reassess their choices and enable the majority of Sevenoaks children to access quality personalised learning in their own town
- Whilst supportive, single sex teaching must be a key feature of the Academy
- The Academy will provide facilities which will encourage learning and will have a critical mass that will allow both Academic and Vocational skills to be developed
- Students, especially those who attend Wildernessee, will be more successful in their achievements if they are placed in new surroundings

Comments against the Proposal

- Instead of spending money on an Academy, the money should be spent on improving what is already in place.
- What provision will be made for those wishing to send their children to non-selective single sex schools?
- There are not enough single sex schools in this country and there are more than enough 'expressive arts' schools.
- Vehicular access and egress at Wildernessee is already a minor nightmare and a further 200+% of traffic is impractical.
- National figures show that girls at a single sex school achieve higher grades than those that go to a mixed school.
- Bradbourne is a good school and this will be ruined by mixing with an underachieving boys' school.
- Two schools into one school means saving money by selling off land and saving on staffing, to the detriment of the education of the girls at Bradbourne.
- Grammar schools have always been single sex schools so why should non-selective schools be any different? This proposal removes choice.
- Although in principle it may be a good school for Sevenoaks, the views of those parents who specifically selected Bradbourne because it is a girls' school and other reasons such as size and culture should be respected.
- The vast majority of academies already running are failing. Wildernessee is also failing and in financial trouble. However, Bradbourne is not failing so why should this school be brought in to bail out a failing school?

- Academies will never be in the same league as grammar schools; in fact most are not even in the same league as average comprehensives.
- If Wildernesse is failing and has monetary issues, then the school should be closed and the boys allocated places in other schools such as Hayesbrook, Tonbridge.
- It is important that a school is of reasonable size so students can get to know each other and not be intimidated by large numbers in an Academy.
- As a solution to local needs, two single sex environments on the existing sites could be provided under the umbrella of a single management team, continuing existing successful educational principles and practices.
- The threat of excellent staff leaving Bradbourne is a concern.
- Kent claims to be at the forefront of developing academies to increase the range and choice of schools across the county to meet local needs. However the proposal for the Academy reduces range and choice, offering another large co-educational establishment, and is therefore in contradiction of these claims where parental choice is totally overlooked.
- For an Academy to be considered, it should be in an underprivileged or deprived area, something Sevenoaks is clearly not.
- The statutory responsibility of the LA to strive to secure diversity of provision and increased responsibility for parental choice would not be met by providing a large co-educational school in the West Kent area.
- Given that the sponsors choose the governors, there is concern that they would therefore gain the running of the Academy through the Governing Body and what appears to be an independent body would actually be biased.
- The low rate of teenage pregnancy at Bradbourne could rise
- Numbers of students with Special Education Needs will rise
- Sponsor should just focus on assisting Wildernesse
- Role of Local Authority as co-sponsor is unclear. A sponsor wields too much power in an Academy.
- If children do as well in mixed schools as they do in single sex ones, why are all grammar schools single sex?
- With the current recession, it would be preferable to spend a smaller amount of money upgrading the current Wildernesse buildings instead.
- The majority of girls at Bradbourne do not want to study alongside boys. Majority of feeling is not against the creation of an academy per se but that closing down Bradbourne to make way for it would not be the best way forward.
- This appears to be an ill-conceived and rushed concept as a matter of political and financial expediency without really being concerned for the future of the current and future pupils.
- Schools should belong to and be accountable to the local community through democratic control.
- There is concern that the Academy will lose the Wildernesse specialism of maths and ICT
- It is the Local Authority's statutory responsibility to strive to secure high standards, diversity of provision and increased opportunities for parental choice. The proposed provision of a co-educational academy specialising in Languages and Expressive Arts reduces opportunities for parental choice.