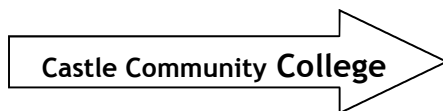


Public Consultation Document

The Future of High School Provision in Deal



Kent County Council would like to hear your views on a proposal to amalgamate Walmer Science College and Castle Community College and establish a new successor school on the Castle Community site.

Date of Public Meetings:

Tuesday 17 November, 7.00 pm at Castle Community College

Wednesday 18 November, 7.00 pm at Walmer Science College



1. INTRODUCTION

Schools in the Dover District, including those in Deal and Walmer, stand to benefit from substantial capital investment through Wave 5 of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. In order to secure optimum capital investment which will benefit all students, the Local Authority is required to consider cost effective school organisation solutions which will improve education outcomes, secure viable long term provision and make best use of available resources.

There are currently two High Schools located in Deal which serve principally the Deal and Walmer communities. Castle Community College and Walmer Science College have a common catchment area, although the schools themselves are located 1.18 miles from each other in Deal and Walmer respectively.

This document contains details of why Kent County Council is undertaking a public consultation on the future of High School provision in Deal. This would include, effectively, the amalgamation of Castle Community College and Walmer Science College by closing the existing two schools and establishing a new successor school.

You will see on page 10 how you can respond to this consultation. I can assure you that all comments received will be carefully considered before decisions are made. The timetables on pages 8 and 9 outline the timescales for the options for establishing the new school should the proposal go forward. There will be an opportunity to attend a public meeting at both schools, details of which are on page 10.

Martyn Doole
Area Children's Services Officer – Dover & Thanet
Kent County Council
Children, Families and Education



2. BACKGROUND

Both Walmer Science College and Castle Community College are good schools which serve their communities well. The prospect of falling secondary school rolls across the area over the next few years poses a significant challenge to the viability of the two schools as separate stand-alone institutions. Secondary schools with less than 600 pupils in Years 7 to 11 face considerable challenges in delivering a broad and balanced curriculum which offers optimum student choice and diversity while making cost effective use of resources.

The table below shows the current pupil numbers at both schools and the predicted numbers by January 2018.

School	Current Number of students on Roll		Forecast Roll by January 2018	
	Years 7 - 11	6th Form	Years 7-11	6th Form
Walmer Science College	678	113	509	100
Castle Community College	497	133	478	92
Total	1175	246	987	192

Both schools were last inspected by Ofsted in November 2007. Walmer Science College was judged “a good school with some outstanding features”. Castle Community College was judged “an outstanding school”. Standards at both schools are potentially in jeopardy over the medium-long term if action is not taken to address the issue of falling rolls. Forecasts based on actual roll data for January 2009, suggest that by 2018/19 (the end of the current BSF planning time frame) both schools would be operating well below 4 forms of entry (an intake of 120 pupils at Year 7). Inevitably this would be likely to pose financial, organisational and curriculum pressures, constraining the educational offer to students. In addition the Local Authority is unlikely to secure optimum capital investment in two separate institutions which serve the same community and which between them have a school population in Years 7 to 11 of less than 1,000 pupils.



3. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to amalgamate Walmer Science College and Castle Community College, by closing both schools and establishing a new successor school if possible by September 2010 but by September 2011 at the latest. All students who are attending the two predecessor schools at the point at which a new school is established, would be guaranteed a place at the new school should they need one.

The Castle Community College site is larger than the Walmer Science College site and already has significant community use. The proposed site for the new successor school is therefore the Castle Community College site which would be substantially redeveloped with significant new build, through the BSF programme, providing state of the art facilities for all students and enhanced community use.

Walmer Science College has some good quality, relatively new building stock as well as other less suitable accommodation. Subject to the outcome of the consultation and decisions yet to be taken by elected members, part of the Walmer Science College site could be retained for development as a vocational centre for all schools in the Dover District, while some of the site could be declared surplus. Proposals for development of part of the site would be drawn up separately and include further local consultation.

A new successor school could be established in one of the following ways:

- The Local Authority could initiate a ‘competition’ and publish a notice which specifies the detailed requirements for the new school and invites interested parties to submit a proposal to run the school. There then follows a further procedural requirement to publish and evaluate proposals received in response to the competition notice against the published specification for the new school. If this process was followed to establish a successor school a final decision would not be reached until late 2010.
- The governing bodies of both Walmer Science College and Castle Community College have indicated that they wish to explore the possibility of setting up a Trust School. A Trust School is a state-funded foundation school supported by a charitable Trust comprising the school and external partners working together for the benefit of the students. The right external partner(s) could contribute significantly to raising achievement. The potential partners in a Trust could apply to the Secretary of State for exemption from the competition requirement. If such an exemption is granted, there would follow a period of public consultation before a decision is made by the Local Authority. Such a decision could possibly be made by June 2010. If it was agreed that the new school should be established, this could happen on existing sites from September 2010.



3. THE PROPOSAL cont.....

- The Local Authority itself could apply to the Secretary of State for exemption from competition under Section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. However, there is a presumption against the establishment of new Community Schools outside of the competition process and such an exemption is unlikely to be granted.

A new school would require the establishment of a single governing body and the appointment of a single headteacher. This would require national advertisement and a competitive recruitment process. Staff employed by each of the two predecessor schools at the point at which the new school comes into being would be entitled to transfer to the new school.

The overriding objective of this proposal would be to ensure that all students have access to the best quality education. Bringing the two schools together as one new school would ensure:

- a school which has the critical mass of students and staff to secure diversity and choice for students;
- a school which demonstrates both commitment and capacity to raise and maintain standards, building on the strengths of the two predecessor schools and engaging with a strong external partner;
- a school which is viable and sustainable in financial and organisational terms;
- the creation of a stable environment for planning staffing structures and curriculum delivery;
- a local high school which would serve the local community and be responsive to local need.



4. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Following this consultation, all views received, either in writing, by email or at the Public Meetings, will be reported to the School Organisation Advisory Board of Kent County Council.

A Cabinet Member decision would then be made taking the following factors into consideration:

- all responses to the consultation process and whether to take forward the proposal to establish a new school;
- whether to endorse a Trust school proposal from the existing governors and external partner(s) and support an application to the Secretary of State for exemption from the competition process. (This assumes that an outline proposal is submitted as part of the consultation process);
- whether or not a competition should be initiated, inviting proposals from potential promoters. If a competition process is initiated the Local Authority could submit its own proposal for a new community school. However if it decided to do so, it would give up the right to determine the outcome which would then fall to the independent schools adjudicator.

When a decision has been reached one of the following could happen:

- If the proposal does not go forward it would be necessary to consider alternative options for tackling the falling rolls situation.
- If a Trust School proposal is supported by the Local Authority, and the Secretary of State grants exemption from competition, the proposed Trust would consult the public for their views on the proposal.
- If the Cabinet Member decides to initiate a competition, a public notice inviting proposals for running the successor school would be published. The competition would run for a period of four months. Following the expiry of the competition notice the Local Authority would publish all proposals received in response to the competition in a statutory notice and there would be an opportunity for interested parties to put forward their views.



5. CONSULTATION & DECISION MAKING TIMETABLE

On this page and the next you will see the possible timescales involved depending on whether a new school was to be established outside or inside a competition.

Public Consultation Period	2 November to 14 December 2009
Two Public Meetings to be held at 7.00 pm At Castle Community College At Walmer Science College	Tuesday 17 November 2009 Wednesday 18 November 2009
Report Back to the Kent County Council School Organisation Advisory Board *	7 January 2010
Members of the Proposed Trust could apply to the Secretary of State for exemption from competition.	January 2010
Cabinet Member Decision to support a proposal for a new Trust School from the Proposed Trust OR Cabinet Member Decision to initiate a competition to establish a new school.	February 2010
Exemption from competition granted or rejected by the Secretary of State	By mid February 2009
If the Local Authority supported a Trust School proposal and exemption from competition was granted, the following timetable would apply.	
The Proposed Trust carries out public consultation on their proposal for a new Trust School.	22 February to 6 April 2010
The Proposed Trust publishes a public notice to establish a New Trust School and the Local Authority publishes closure notices for the existing schools.	Public Notices period 22 April to 3 June 2010
Cabinet Member Decision on the proposal for a new Trust School and the closure of the existing schools.	14 June 2010
Implementation	September 2010
New Buildings available on the Castle site.	By December 2014

The School Organisation Advisory Board meeting is held at County Hall, Maidstone and the webcast can be watched via the kent.gov.uk website.

The meeting is open to the public.



5. CONSULTATION & DECISION MAKING TIMETABLE cont...

<p>If exemption from competition is not granted to the Proposed Trust, or the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education decides that a competition should be initiated so that other interested parties could have the opportunity of putting forward a proposal to run the new school, the following timetable would apply.</p>	
Cabinet Member decision to initiate a competition	February 2010
The Local Authority publishes an 'Invitation to Bid' Competition Notice which runs for a period of 4 months. During this period the DCSF would market the competition to potential promoters and hold a local seminar within the first 5 weeks of the competition notice period.	25 February 2010
Competition Notice expires	25 June 2010
The Local Authority publishes a second notice summarising the proposals received in response to the first notice. If the Local Authority decided to submit a proposal for a new community school, this would be included. The Local Authority publishes closure notices for the existing schools.	Public Notice period 15 July to 27 August 2010 (during the first two weeks of this period the Local Authority would hold a public meeting to give interested parties the opportunity to find out more about the proposals and put forward their views).
If the Local Authority has not submitted a proposal, the Cabinet Member would make a decision on the proposals received in response to the Competition Notice together with the closure proposals. If the Local Authority submits a proposal as part of the competition process, all decisions would be made by the Schools Adjudicator.	Cabinet Member Decision by 27 October 2010 OR Referral to the Schools Adjudicator by 10 September 2010
Adjudicator Decision—if referred	November 2010
Implementation	September 2011
New Buildings available on the Castle site	By December 2014



6. HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

Complete and return the response form to:

Martyn Doole, Area Children's Services Officer (Dover & Thanet)
Clover House, John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3QZ. Fax: 01227 772290

(Your comments must reach us by 14 December 2009)

Come to a public meeting on:

Tuesday 17 November, 7.00 pm

at Castle Community College, Mill Road, Deal CT14 9BD

Wednesday 18 November, 7.00 pm

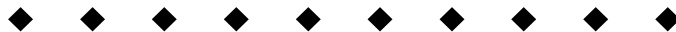
at Walmer Science College, Salisbury Road, Walmer, Deal CT14 7QJ

- An elected member of Kent County Council will chair these meetings, at which all interested parties will have an opportunity to put forward their views.
- Officers from the Local Authority will also be present to clarify points of detail.

Email your comments to:

school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

(We will note all you say, but will not be able to respond individually to response forms, letters or emails)





Public Consultation Response Form

The proposed amalgamation of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 14 December 2009

To: Martyn Doole, Area Children’s Services Officer–Dover & Thanet
East Kent Education Office, Clover House,
John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way, Whitstable, Kent CT5 3QZ
Fax: (01227) 772290

You can also email your views to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

Do you agree with the proposal?

Yes

No

I am: (please tick as appropriate)

The parent/carer of a student at Walmer Science College

The parent/carer of a student at Castle Community College

A member of staff at Walmer Science College

A member of staff at Castle Community College

A governor of Walmer Science College

A governor of Castle Community College

A student at Walmer Science College

A student at Castle Community College

Other interested party

Name of other school or interested party

.....

Name:

Address:

Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.

PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS OVERLEAF



My comments are as follows:

Please continue on another sheet if necessary

This document is available on:
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations/>

Responses can be emailed to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

If you have difficulty reading this document and require it in another format please contact your school.