

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12th December, 2012

9.30 am

**Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**

Please note earlier start time





AGENDA

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12th December, 2012, at Ask for: **Anna Taylor**
9.30 am
Darent Room, Sessions House, County Telephone: **01622 694764**
Hall, Maidstone

Membership

Conservative (7): Mr R F Manning (Chairman), Mr D A Hirst (Vice-Chairman),
Mr B R Cope, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr P J Homewood, Mr J E Scholes
and Mr C T Wells

Liberal Democrat (1): Mrs T Dean

Labour (1) Mr G Cowan

Independent (1) Mr R J Lees

Church Dr A Bamford and Mr A Tear

Representatives:

Parent Governor: Mr P Myers and Mr B Critchley

Refreshments will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting

Timing of items as shown below is approximate and subject to change.

County Councillors who are not Members of the Committee but who wish to ask questions at the meeting are asked to notify the Chairman of their questions in advance.

Webcasting Notice

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured then you should make the Clerk of the meeting aware.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

A - Committee Business

- A1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- A2 Substitutes
- A3 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A4 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2012 (Pages 1 - 4)

B - Any items called-in

- B1 Amalgamation of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College
Decision:- 12/01977 (Pages 5 - 30)

D - Select Committee programme

- D1 Select Committee - Apprenticeships (Pages 31 - 38)

MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

C - Any items placed on the agenda by any Member of the Council for discussion

- C1 Fastrack Phase 1 Major Scheme - Compulsory Purchase Order Claim by Darent Valley Hospital Trust, Dartford (Pages 39 - 66)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 4 December 2012

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 24 October 2012.

PRESENT: Mr R F Manning (Chairman), Mr B R Cope, Mr G Cowan, Mrs T Dean, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr P J Homewood, Mr R J Lees and Mr J E Scholes

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE: Mr Stephen Bryan representing the Archdiocese of Southwark

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M J Whiting (Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Blincow (Research and Development Manager), Mrs S Rogers (Director of Education, Quality and Standards), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services) and Mrs A Taylor (Research Officer to Scrutiny Committee)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2012 *(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

8. Key Stage 2 Attainment *(Item B1)*

- (1) Mrs Rogers, Director of Education, Quality and Standards introduced the item and explained that the Key Stage 2 (KS2) Attainment select committee had looked at the whole remit for KS2 and how the factors affecting KS2 performance could be addressed. This had resulted in a significant report challenging the service to improve its performance at KS2 and to explore the issues highlighted by the select committee.
- (2) The service had been actively discussing school's performance with them through the Kent Challenge scheme. From the 2012 results KS2 (level 4 English and Maths combined) had gone up to 78% this year, the fastest progress that Kent had seen in terms of achieving national benchmark. Of the 123 schools that were targeted for Kent Challenge in 2010 only 30 schools achieved floor standard, last year this rose to 70 schools, and this year 109 of the 123 schools were above the floor standard. This was a significant improvement in the number of schools achieving the floor standard in English and Maths at Key Stage 2 and there was an expectation of further improvement.
- (3) Kent County Council (KCC) was closing the gap with its statistical neighbours in relation to attainment; the aim was to be in line if not above the other shire authorities in 2013.

- (4) Mr Whiting expressed his congratulations to the team, they had taken on the various aspects of the select committee report and great improvements were being made.
- (5) Members commended the directorate on the improvements made in KS2. It was important to raise the attainment levels in the deprived wards, peer pressure and continued mentoring and support for headteachers and schools staff was essential.
- (6) Members raised the following questions and received the following answers:
- a. Referring to page 10 of the agenda papers '*we expect to spend £3.5million by next March*', a Member asked for an explanation of what the money would be spent on. Mrs Rogers explained that funding had been received from the funding forum to accelerate improvement in schools in collaboratives. KCC was being cautious about releasing the money as it was vital that it made a real difference in schools. Best practice was being shared by ensuring that outstanding schools were part of the collaborations.
 - b. Is any allowance made for children and their parents coming into Kent who did not have English as their first language? Mrs Rogers explained that many schools in Kent had a significant number of children for whom English was not their first language. KCC and the voluntary sector worked hard with schools to ensure there was provision to support these children and their families. However, it was important to note that the breakdown of figures showed that the vulnerable groups that were poorest performing in Kent were not the English as an additional language groups, they were often the free school meal, white indigenous groups, predominantly boys. It was vital to ensure that the background of a child did not determine their future and everyone needed to work together to do this. Mr Whiting explained that the pupil premium funding formula had recently been consulted on and there was a hope that additional funding would be received for children with English as an additional language.
 - c. Referring to the need to target the vulnerable groups within schools there was no differentiation within the action plan between the different groups in the schools with additional problems. There was no target on gender which was important because of the traditional underperformance of boys. Regarding funding; was there any feeling that the conversion to academies had contributed to the increase in achievement in some of the schools. Mrs Rogers explained that whilst the improvement in Kent had been good, no-one was being complacent. A report setting out a breakdown of all the vulnerable groups and gender would be submitted to the Education Cabinet Committee in November.
 - d. Mr Whiting explained that the Education Cabinet Committee received update reports on the progress of the service but the Scrutiny Committee was welcome to look into any relevant issues if necessary.
 - e. Mrs Rogers explained that feedback received confirmed that headteachers were grateful for the challenge KCC was giving them and that the Kent

Challenge approach was working. Officers were consistently taking headteachers out to other areas, often in London, with a similar school makeup to show what could be achieved.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee

- (7) Thank Mr Whiting and Mrs Rogers for attending the meeting and for answering Members' questions
- (8) Note and commend the improvement in KS2 standards in 2012.

9. Student Journey

(Item B2)

- (1) Mr Blincow introduced the report and explained that the background to the select committee was around the challenges that young people faced when they moved into employment. The legislation and policy surrounding the issues contained within the select committee report was changing quickly and this was important to note.
- (2) Mr Lees was a member of the select committee and explained that it was important to the select committee that the recommendations were both practical and achievable, it was encouraging to see the progress that had been made and that things were working. Most of the amber areas in the action plan concerned the legislative changes that had been referred to previously.
- (3) The Chairman invited the graduates on Kent County Council's graduate programme to the table to offer their views on the subject. There was a question on the graduate entry routes and opportunities. Mr Blincow explained that the challenge was to raise the standard of the skills of all young people to enable them to find the correct pathway to enter employment.
- (4) Kent County Council was working with companies to encourage valuable work experience and offer alternative qualifications to encourage young people who otherwise might be disengaged from the education process to participate. Research showed that having a degree or further qualification enhanced young people's chances of employment. Portfolios were being developed to record young people's skills and achievements not only in school but outside of school.
- (5) A number of action points within the plan were waiting for further information and letters to be written to the Secretary of State. Members queried the location of the Kent Choices4u website. Mr Blincow explained that consultations which were received were being responded to which had delayed the Secretary of State's letter. Regarding the website it had been hoped that Kent Choices4u would remain as a stand-alone website but it had been incorporated into the kent.gov website.
- (6) Concerns were raised about careers education in schools, this was vitally important to help young people find what they enjoyed and what they were good at. Young people needed to be made aware of the opportunities for employment. There was a duty on schools to secure appropriate independent careers guidance for 14-16year olds, however there was no additional funding for this and

next year this duty was to be extended to 19 year olds and year 8 secondary schools. The council was working with schools to support them on this duty which was a challenge for schools.

- (7) Following an invitation from the Chairman the Kent Graduates explained to members their experiences of careers advice in their own schools.
- (8) Further investigation would be carried out in relation to the location of the KentChoices4u website and this information would be reported back to Members.

POST MEETING NOTE: An email from the Chairman of the Select Committee was circulated to Scrutiny Committee Members 29 November 2012.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee:

- (9) Thank Mr Whiting, Mr Blincow and the Kent Graduates (Chris Beale, Tim Middleton, Sam Newing, Matthew Southern and Keturah Watts) for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.
- (10) Endorse the Student Journey Action Plan
- (11) Recognise the legislative and policy changes made that impact on the Student Journey Select Committee recommendations.

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.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL - RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY

DECISION NO.

MIKE WHITING

12/01977

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

Unrestricted

Subject: Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School) and Castle Community College (Academy)

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills, I agree to

- (i) the issuing of 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
- (ii) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills to enter into any necessary contracts / agreements on behalf of the County Council
- (iii) AUTHORISE the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

Reason(s) for decision

1.1 On 12 September 2012, Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member that a consultation take place regarding the proposal 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.

1.2 The governing bodies of both schools recognise the need to consider whether the demand for secondary education in the area will, in the future, support two separate schools. The idea of joining the schools to form one larger and more sustainable organisation has been debated for several years. In 2009 the governing bodies wished to amalgamate the schools, but the proposal was put into abeyance because of external factors. The governing bodies and the Local Authority now wish to bring forward the proposal again for the following reasons:

- (i) The total rolls have fallen with very low intakes in Years 7 and 8 at Walmer Science College.
- (ii) The projected number of pupils will not sustain two schools.
- (iii) The financial effect of sharing the available pupils and therefore the funding for them will mean budget deficits, staffing cuts and narrowing of curriculum choice, which would affect both schools.
- (iv) Walmer Science College in particular will face a growing deficit budget which would result in a shortfall of approximately £1m. The action needed to address this will render the school unviable.
- (v) Government capital investment at Castle Community College through the Priority Schools Building programme will enable the rebuild of the school to accommodate 1,300 students; large enough to accommodate the students of both schools, currently and in the future.

1.3 Much better facilities will be offered through the new build resulting from the Priority School Building Programme funding, so that all pupils in time can be educated on one site. For the present both school sites would continue to operate as the new build on the Castle site would not be expected to be completed before 2016.

1.4 To achieve the proposed amalgamation, Walmer Science College would merge with Castle Community College, which would enlarge to take the Walmer students. Because Castle Community College is an Academy, the technical means of achieving this would be to issue a Public Notice which would in effect close Walmer Science College. This proposal is conditional upon the Secretary of State's agreement to the enlargement of Castle Community College

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation

The proposed decision was considered by the Education Cabinet Committee at its meeting held on 21st November 2012. The committee considered the proposal and understood the concerns raised from the members of the public at the public meeting and in the response to the consultation. The committee when presented with all the factors recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills 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.

However the Committee asked that the Cabinet Member, when making his decision, consider the following actions

- (1) Ensure the current site of Walmer Science College is retained for educational purposes once the proposed lease to Castle Community College expires.
- (2) Encourage the governors of Castle Community School to consider a new name and uniform for the school.
- (3) Encourage a fair recruitment process for both teachers at Walmer Science College (Community School) and Castle Community College (Academy)

In response to Education Cabinet Committees recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills assured the Committee the site would be retained for educational purposes and agreed to write to both governing Bodies asking them to consider the actions raised in point 2 and 3 above.

Any alternatives considered:

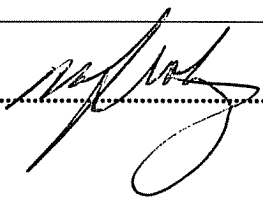
An alternative proposal put forward by the 'Save Walmer Science College Group' to allow the school to continue under a new structure would not remove the current difficulties faced by the school in relation to roll numbers, financial deficit and ability in these circumstances to be able to attract a strong headteacher, strong senior management team and full complement of excellent teaching staff.

Also put forward by the Group was a proposal to retain both school sites and allow a newly merged school to continue to operate over the two sites with the year groups split; one site accommodating the lower year groups and the other site accommodating the upper year groups including the 6th form. The logic of this proposal is fully understood but given the situation with Priority School Building funding for Castle Community College to rebuild the school to its original size (1300 students) this not a long term option. Both sites will be used in the interim until the new build on the Castle Community College site is completed, which is expected to be September 2016. No decision has been made about the future use of the Walmer Science College site at this point. All options will be considered, including the feasibility of educational and community use.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

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signed



.....
date

3/12/12

By:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills
	Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Education Cabinet Committee – 21 November 2012
Subject	Decision No.12/01977-Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School) and Castle Community College (Academy)
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report sets out the results of the public consultation on a proposal from the governing bodies of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College, together with Kent County Council, to bring together the two secondary schools to form one school for the Walmer/Deal community, which will be an Academy.
Recommendations:	That a recommendation is made to Cabinet to issue a public notice for the closure of Walmer Science College (Community) from September 2013 conditional upon the agreement of the Secretary of State to enlarge Castle Community College (Academy).

This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to Education Cabinet Committee on 12 September 2012. The report is available via the following link: <http://kent590w3:9070/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=746&MId=4880&Ver=4>

1. Introduction and Proposal

1.1 On 12 September 2012, Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member that a consultation take place regarding the proposal 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.

1.2 The governing bodies of both schools recognise the need to consider whether the demand for secondary education in the area will, in the future, support two separate schools. The idea of joining the schools to form one larger and more sustainable organisation has been debated for several years. In 2009 the governing bodies wished to amalgamate the schools, but the proposal was put into abeyance because of external factors. The governing bodies and the Local Authority now wish to bring forward the proposal again for the following reasons:

- (i) The total rolls have fallen with very low intakes in Years 7 and 8 at Walmer Science College.
- (ii) The projected number of pupils will not sustain two schools.
- (iii) The financial effect of sharing the available pupils and therefore the funding for them will mean budget deficits, staffing cuts and narrowing of curriculum choice, which would affect both schools.

- (iv) Walmer Science College in particular will face a growing deficit budget which would result in a shortfall of approximately £1m. The action needed to address this will render the school unviable.
- (v) Government capital investment at Castle Community College through the Priority Schools Building programme will enable the rebuild of the school to accommodate 1,300 students; large enough to accommodate the students of both schools, currently and in the future.

1.3 Much better facilities will be offered through the new build resulting from the Priority School Building Programme funding, so that all pupils in time can be educated on one site. For the present both school sites would continue to operate as the new build on the Castle site would not be expected to be completed before 2016.

1.4 To achieve the proposed amalgamation, Walmer Science College would merge with Castle Community College, which would enlarge to take the Walmer students. Because Castle Community College is an Academy, the technical means of achieving this would be to issue a Public Notice which would in effect close Walmer Science College. This proposal is conditional upon the Secretary of State's agreement to the enlargement of Castle Community College

1.5 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place between 4 October and 15 November 2012.

2. The Public Consultation

2.1 Approximately 2,500 hard copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. The consultation document was distributed to parents/carers, staff and governors of both schools, County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, local library, Dover District Council, and others, in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website and the link to the website widely circulated. (www.kent.gov.uk/WalmerandCastle). There was the opportunity to send in written responses using the response form, email and online.

2.2 Two public meetings were held during the consultation period, Wednesday 17 October at Walmer Science College and Thursday 18 October at Castle Community College. Both meetings were well attended by parents, governors, staff and interested parties, with approximately 160 people at the Walmer meeting and 150 at the Castle meeting. Attendance included the Member of Parliament for the area, the Local Members, and District Councillors.

2. Outcomes of the Public Consultation

Written Responses – to be tabled at the meeting

3.1 The public consultation closes on Thursday 15 November. By 7 November, 458 responses had been received; 50 in favour of the proposal, 399 against and 9 undecided. The final numbers will be tabled at the meeting on 21 November.

3.2 A summary of written responses received by 7 November is attached as Appendix 1. An updated version of Appendix 1 will be tabled at the meeting on 21 November.

- 3.3 Mr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for ELS was presented with a petition when he met with the Dover Mercury newspaper on 31 October. The petition was signed by 640 people opposing the proposal, approximately 400 of whom indicated that they lived in the Deal/Walmer locality.

Public Meeting Responses

- 3.3 A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meetings is attached as Appendix 2.

4. Views

4.1 Views of the Local Members

The Local Members for Deal and Walmer are Mr Kit Smith and Mrs Julie Rook. Both Members attended the public meetings and their views are as follows:

Mr Kit Smith

- Mr Smith is a Member of the Education Cabinet Committee and does not wish to form a judgement until he has seen or heard all the evidence.

Mr Smith will decide with the other Members of the Education Cabinet Committee at the meeting on 21 November, on the recommendation to be made to Mr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for ESL, on the basis of all the information gathered.

Mrs Julie Rook

I want to take an unemotional and logical view of the issue in hand and whilst I totally understand the views of current pupils and their parents, I am looking to the future and want the best education for the children of Deal. After assessing all the information I have concluded that secondary education will need to be provided in one centralised and highly resources rebuilt school rather than delivered in two smaller separate ones.

I would like to add a few caveats however:

1. That the school remaining open is given a new name and a new uniform chosen in consultation with pupils and parents and that this new uniform be provided at no cost to current parents.
2. That the school remaining open allows all employees the opportunity to compete for positions.
3. That the Cabinet Member for Education assures us that Walmer Science College will be retained as an educational facility along with Barnes Close Cricket Club.
4. That an independent study is undertaken to inform us of the impact of future population growth to ensure any bulge can be catered for smoothly and pragmatically.
5. That a traffic impact assessment is undertaken without delay and a traffic management plan developed and implemented.
6. That all pupils, particularly those with special needs and those undertaking summative Key Stage examinations receive extra pastoral support and educational continuity.

4.2 Views of the Governing Bodies

Walmer Science College

The Governing Body of Walmer Science College is overwhelmingly in favour of the merger of the two schools. A year ago it came to realise that falls in the school's roll meant that unless action was taken the school faced a deficit in its budget in three years' time of over £750m. Despite action being taken to reduce staffing, another small intake into Year 7 this year means that projections for the next three years indicate an increased deficit. This would necessitate further substantial reduction in staff numbers.

At the same time, governors realised that those falls in roll meant that it will be difficult to offer a full range of subjects to the current Year 9, which has fewer than 120 students, when they reach Key Stage 4, and that it will be impossible to do so for the current Year 8, which has fewer than 60 students, when they reach Key Stage 4 in two years' time.

In seeking to address the problems governors took the decision to look again at joining with Castle Community college. Both schools are significantly under the average size for secondary schools and that has an impact on the provision they can make for their pupils. There has been concern for a number of years that students in Deal are at a disadvantage compared with those in Sandwich and Dover, where larger schools can offer more and better facilities and greater choice and variety in the curriculum particularly at Key Stage 4.

The fact that Castle Community College has secured funding for a totally new building means that this is a heaven sent opportunity to join these schools, which need each other to offer Deal students the excellence of provision they deserve, on one site with a range of facilities and curriculum provision to stand comparison any secondary school in Kent.

In summary there were two imperatives guiding Walmer Governors in their decision to vote to bring together Walmer Science College and Castle Community College.

1. Very serious concern that this school may soon be in a position where it can no longer provide an adequate level of provision for all its pupils.
2. Even more importantly, governors were convinced that a single school on a single site will offer the students of Deal a range of provision and opportunity that neither Walmer Science College or Castle Community College can possibly ever offer on their own.

Castle Community College

We the Governing Body of Castle Community College fully support the proposal to bring together Castle Community College and Walmer Science College for the following reasons;

- In 2007 we worked together to form a joint 6th form which opened in 2009. This 6th form has gone from strength to strength. In 2012 we offer 34 subjects and an increase of 14% in exams results this year.
- We see this proposal as a natural move from the joint 6th form. Having one medium size School in the Deal Area would afford the following;
 - It would secure education for our pupils for the foreseeable future.
 - It would offer a broad and balanced curriculum. That will prepare our young people for the workplace.
 - Most pupils would be in walking distance of the new school.

- The Walmer site would be ideal for a 6th form College, it would also offer head room for the future.

4.3 Views of Mr Philip Bunn, Executive Principal, Castle Community College and Walmer Science College

The Public Consultation Meetings enabled staff, students and governors from both schools, and members of the public from the local and wider community to hear the rationale behind the joint proposal, which aims to provide access to a high quality education for all students in the Deal/Walmer area for years to come. The meetings also provided a detailed explanation of the financial, school roll, and academic standards situation facing Walmer Science College – details which the general public would not ordinarily be aware of.

Clearly, feelings run high when a school closure is being discussed – hopefully the community has a better understanding of why the governors of both schools, in conjunction with KCC, are working together on this proposal and trying not to stigmatise Walmer Science College with ‘closure’.

- The student numbers projected for the area shows no appreciable need for growth in secondary school places, and the number of students in the area will not sustain two secondary schools. That is clear.
- On 25th October 2012, the DfE/EFA confirmed that Castle Community College will receive a brand new school to house 1300 students with a projected opening date of September 2016.
- Castle Community College roll is expanding, and Walmer Science College roll is contracting, which means that action is urgently needed – without it, Walmer Science College is facing a painful death if the current situation is not addressed.
- No one has suggested any alternative proposals to address the situation – the same arguments for a single school for Deal/Walmer that were discussed 3 years ago have not gone away.

The financial position of Walmer Science College shows a clear and significant deficit which has to be addressed with some urgency. The status quo is not an option:

- Walmer Science College faces significant staff reductions/redundancies to address the large budget deficit (c £1million by 2014/15). The scale of these staff reductions is likely to make the school unviable.
- The Walmer Science College school roll continues to fall; a situation that doesn't look likely to improve in the future. Parent attendance at the Walmer Science College Open Mornings/Evenings was very low. On 23rd October 2012, 16 families attended the Open Evening and 5 families attended the Open Morning. There are a number of reasons for this low attendance (including the impact of the Public Consultation and threat of closure being made public), but it seems highly unlikely that the recruitment of students to Year 7 in September 2013 will show any appreciable increase on the past 2 years.

Staff at both schools have a clear understanding of the rationale for the proposal, but understandably, have very different views about the proposal. Staff at Castle Community College are much more positive about the proposal, Walmer Science

College staff are very concerned about their jobs and feel that they are being 'taken over'.

It is very clear that if the proposal for the merger is to go ahead, planning for the transition/ integration of the students/staff into the enlarged Castle Community College needs careful early planning, which should involve all members of the two school communities in order to address/overcome any of their concerns and make the merger a success.

In conclusion, there are many concerns about the merger from the various parties - this is understandable. But it is my belief that none of the concerns expressed by any parties are insurmountable, and that the opportunities afforded to the students, both current and future, far outweigh any of the reasons stated for the status quo to continue.

4.4 Views of the Students – provided by the Executive Principal

Walmer Science College

Students at Walmer Science College have been able to express their views in a number of ways:

- Following assemblies led by the Head of School Julia Scannell, form tutors have held discussions with students, who have all had the opportunity to submit written responses to the consultation.
- In addition, representatives from each Key Stage have met with Chair of Governors, Robin Curtis, Head of School, Julia Scannell, and Executive Principal, Philip Bunn. The School Council has also discussed the merger proposal. Students have been given the opportunity to seek explanations for the proposal, ask questions about it, and express their views and opinions.

These meetings were very useful in helping students to gain a better understanding of the issues, and clarify the myths, misconceptions and rumours that have been circulating in the locality and press about the consultation e.g. the press reporting that Walmer Science College staff had not been allowed to speak in the Public Consultation Meetings (not true).

Understandably, Walmer Science College students have strong views against the proposal. None of the students want their school to close. There is a strong '*anti*' feeling against and a degree of hostility towards the proposal.

Older students have a better understanding of the impact of falling rolls on the school's finances and, ultimately, the viability of the school. They are also able to understand the restrictions that these place on the curriculum and subject choices at KS4 and the curriculum. The Key Stage 4/Sixth Form students can see the rationale behind the proposal, but still don't want closure to happen. These students expressed a strong view that if the proposal to merge goes ahead, they feel that they should have a major input into the transition arrangements.

The younger students find the financial/school roll issues more difficult to comprehend, and are very defensive about their school. The meetings with the Chair of Governors, Head of School and Executive Principal, have helped them to have a better understanding of the proposal, and given them the opportunity to express their views,

but these students are still opposed to it (possibly because they are more affected by the proposals than the older students)

Castle Community College

Students at Castle Community College have been able to express their views in a number of ways:

- Following assemblies led by the Principal, Philip Bunn, form tutors and members of the ALT have held discussions with students, who have all had the opportunity to submit written responses to the consultation.
- Students have been given the opportunity to seek explanations for the proposal, ask questions about it, and express their views and opinions both individually and through the School Council.

Castle Community College students expressed their concerns about the proposal. They are less 'anti' or negative about the proposal (probably since it is not their school that is threatened with closure). However, it would not be accurate to say that they are all in favour of it.

Not many students have submitted written responses. The views expressed by students have focussed more on their concerns about the merger process and how their concerns about merging the two student bodies can be overcome. The younger students (Years 7 and 8) are more anxious about the proposal than the older students.

Sixth Form/Year 11 students talk about the positive effect that the joint sixth form has had, and hope that the integration process of the two schools could follow similar lines to the way that the joint sixth form was set up.

As with the Walmer Science College student discussions, the opportunity to dispel several myths and misconceptions has been helpful – Castle Community College students now have a better understanding of the issues.

Castle Community College students have expressed a strong view that they want to play as full a part in the transition/integration process as possible, and it is clear from the students at both schools, that if the proposal is to go ahead, then the students need to be as fully involved in the planning process as possible.

4.5 Views of Highways

Views have not been sought at this point from Highways. If the proposal goes ahead, the Academy will plan how both sites will be used and produce a revised Travel Plan accordingly. The rebuild of Castle Community College will go ahead whatever the outcome of the consultation and it is expected that the project, which will be managed by the DfE, will start in 2014. At that time Highways will be involved and the access to the school and the impact on the local area will be considered and consulted on.

4.5 Views of the Area Education Officer

The needs of young people to be able to access high quality secondary education in Deal are paramount. The current situation is untenable and will result in both existing schools being challenged in future to make good enough provision, due to financial

pressures resulting from the numbers of available pupils. The requirement for action now is inescapable and the opportunity offered through this proposal will enable high quality secondary provision to be secured for the pupils of Walmer and Deal.

The combined secondary rolls of the two schools, (currently 1080 Years 7-11) will constitute one medium-sized secondary school able to sustain the necessary future curriculum breadth. Walmer Science College will very quickly become unviable as a stand alone school, given the current small pupil intake numbers (51 in 2011 and 58 in 2012, with a PAN of 143). It is unlikely from the evidence available that the Year 7 intake in 2013 or in the future years will change this pattern.

The birth rate in the District rose after 2002 and is now falling again. At present there is 9.8% surplus capacity in the Deal primary schools. This is expected to reduce but some capacity will remain. The impact on numbers in secondary education has been taken into account in the pupil forecasts. The total number of secondary pupils is not projected to rise significantly in the coming years, taking into account proposed housing development.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found at:
http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/317282/7615077.1/PDF/-/EIA%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20Report%20WSC_CCC%20August12.pdf

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the responses to the consultation, consider the proposal to merge Castle Community College and Walmer Science College to form one Academy from September 2013 and to recommend to Cabinet member for Education, Learning and Skills the issuing of 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.

7. Background Documents (and links to them)

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board: 8 October 2009
<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/s7809/Item%206%20-%20The%20Future%20of%20High%20School%20Provision%20in%20Deal.pdf>

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board: 7 January 2010
<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/s9168/Item%204%20-%20Walmer%20and%20Castle%20Amalgamation.pdf>

Lead Officer Contact details

Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer until 31 October 2012
Marisa White, Area Education Officer from 1 November 2012
01227 284407.
marisa.white@kent.gov.uk

Final version to be tabled at the meeting

**The Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School)
and Castle Community College (Academy)**

Summary of written responses (received by 7 November)

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed:	2,500
Responses received: (by 7 November)	458

Parents

In support of the proposal

- This proposal will bring increased chances and a wider variety of opportunities for the young people in Deal/Walmer
- Bringing the two schools together will put a stop to the 'them and us' mentality in the area.
- The proposal should go ahead to raise standards for all students in Deal and Walmer.
- Walmer Science College is currently not fit for purpose.
- There will be some, very regrettable but inevitable, disruption in the short to medium term but the alternatives would create an even more desperate situation for the pupils attending Walmer Science College
- The staff of Walmer Science College deserve the opportunity to prove, that, with the right leadership, they can perform to the standards which the pupils deserve.
- Another main entrance would be needed for Castle Community College when the school is rebuilt. A bigger entrance in Brunswick Terrace /Hamilton Road.

Against the proposal

- The situation is due to change in the next five years or so as the very large intake currently stretching primary schools to the limit will feed through.
- Parents in Deal and Walmer have for decades been able to exercise choice between the two schools and it is plainly wrong that this should be withdrawn.
- Walmer Science College should be allowed to go it alone as an Academy if it is not possible to leave it just as it is.
- A federation arrangement could be made with other schools allowing Walmer to remain intact and with a great degree of autonomy.
- I feel if the school becomes bigger the individual care these children need will be overseen because they will be numbers in a vast school.
- We value what is here right now and we want investment to be in the two sites, not in creating one large new school.
- The students would be working in an unsettled and difficult environment, which will lead to a drop in performance.
- If this happens there will be animosity and conflict between the students of the two schools leading to bullying.
- Walmer Science College has had a lot of money spent on it recently improving the school and facilities, including the Maritime Centre. Will this not be a complete waste if this goes ahead?
- Our children have already had to go through a primary school merger and we do not want to put our children through this again.

- Walmer Science College has improved dramatically in the last year and should be allowed to continue to do so.
- This proposal is all about saving money.

Students

Against the Proposal

- We need two schools within this area as it gives both parents and students an option as to where they would like to study.
- There will be lots of fighting because Walmer and Castle students have always been rivals.
- The intake at Walmer will be a lot higher in 2013 due to our Maritime Studies Centre and new facilities which are much better than Castle's.
- There will be many staff redundancies – this will cause big problems and will have such a negative effect on peoples' lives.
- Please listen to the students and not only put Kent First, but Kent's Youth.
- Walmer Science College managed to come out of special measures in one year, so the school must be doing something right.
- The staff have worked very hard to improve Walmer.
- The transport and new uniform will cost our parents a fortune.
- I have grown comfortable in Walmer and sometimes refer to it as my second home.
- If the proposal goes ahead there will be too many pupils in a class.
- This will interfere with our GCSE's because of the stress of moving around and learning new things.
- I am worried about how this will affect my education as teachers that have planned my courses would have to leave.
- When we were visited by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, she was very pleased with our school and the students but mostly the new Maritime Centre.
- It is good to have the two separate schools if only you would give us a chance. Just give us a couple of more years as we are on the path to becoming great again.
- If the merger does happen, please don't allow the school to have the Castle name and uniform.
- With planned new housing in Sholden, the population of Deal is only going to rise.
- There will be vast amounts of disruption and larger classes, especially whilst the new proposed building is under construction.
- You may 'promise' that there are no plans for the Walmer site to become a housing estate but we cannot believe there is no ulterior motive.
- The Maritime and Engineering courses might stop if the merger goes ahead.

Staff

For the Proposal

- Walmer Science College is not financially viable and cannot offer the standard of education to which students and parents are entitled.
- When the opportunity for success at one small school is shrinking and at the other soaring, it is against good judgement for the merger not to happen.
- It will provide the community with fantastic opportunities in the future.
- I have seen the benefits of bringing the two schools together for the sixth form and the students have integrated without issue.
- The proposal offers equal opportunities for all young people of Deal.
- Better facilities will be provided for staff and students and there will be a further feel of "community".

Against the Proposal

- Staff will lose their jobs.
- Small schools are better, less children in classes.
- Reduced staffing will mean that class sizes will increase significantly.
- Taking choice away is a big negative for the community.
- The access to Castle is appalling, with increased numbers of pupils, this can only cause massive disruption and congestion to traffic.
- Losing staff from one school and not at the other doesn't seem fair.
- The pupils at Walmer have had enough disruption over the last few years, and have come through it admirably, but they don't deserve any more.
- Very short-sighted, with not much thought for staff or students at Walmer.

Other Interested Parties

For the Proposal

- Neither of the current schools is educationally viable and even with a future increase of pupil numbers coming through from the primary phase, one, properly staffed and equipped secondary school will meet the town's needs far better than two small schools.

Against the Proposal

- Reducing to one school leaves no room for major expansion or allowance for an increase in school population.
- Merging the two schools will create problems in Mill Road and become unbearable for people living in the road.
- Both small schools should be kept, as a small school can help foster an understanding and appreciation between teachers and pupils and supports the well disciplined and courteous behaviour of the students.
- Creating one school definitely deprives parents of choice.
- With an academy there will be no controls of the syllabus or administration of the school.
- Suggested option if the merger goes ahead: Year 7 and 8 should be sited at Castle – where the children could be given greater pastoral care and be nurtured more. Year 9 onwards should be sited at Walmer – where they will have grown wings to fly, offering a wide range of courses and activities.

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**The Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School)
and Castle Community College (Academy)**

**Summary of the Public Meetings held on 17 October 2012 at Walmer
Science College and 18 October 2012 at Castle Community College**

Both meetings were chaired by Mr Leyland Ridings

The key issues raised are summarised below.

**Walmer Science College meeting on 17 October 2012 attended by
approximately 160 people including parents, staff, governors and other
interested parties**

Parents

There were concerns raised by several parents regarding the Maritime class recently opened by Princess Anne and whether this would continue if the merger went ahead.

- Mr Philip Bunn, Executive Headteacher confirmed that the Maritime class would continue.

Concerns were raised about a change of school uniform if the proposal goes ahead and the cost to parents.

- Mr Philip Bunn, Executive Headteacher responded that the any changes to the uniform would be funded by the Academy.

Will the Dyslexia Unit remain?

- Mrs Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer confirmed that there were no plans to alter the provision within this proposal and that it would continue.

Concerns were raised about staff losing their jobs.

- Robin Curtis, Chair of Governors at Walmer responded saying that there would need to be redundancies at Walmer Science College whether the proposal goes ahead or not, because significant saving would need to be made in order to reduce the deficit budget facing the school.

Other Comments

- Concerns were raised about class sizes if the proposal goes ahead.
- The proposal will remove choice for the families of Deal and Walmer.
- Concerns about the continuation of studies for children in the middle of GCSEs.
- Families like small schools and would not want their children educated in a large school.

- If the proposal doesn't take place, options for our children will be limited.
- The merger will be an opportunity for our children both educationally and socially.

Other Interested Parties

- The rising birth rate and new housing will result in more students coming forward in the future.
- This proposal is short-sighted and money driven.
- If the merger goes ahead it is hoped that the Walmer Science College site will stay as an education establishment and not be sold off for housing.
- A reserve plan needs to be put in place as to what happens to the Walmer Science College site and a commitment is required from KCC.
- We were told this proposal was a merger but it is the closure of Walmer Science College

Governors

- The governors of both schools are mindful of the impact on students of this proposal and will do everything to support the young people.
- This has not been an easy process for the governors but this proposal is in the best interests of the students at both schools

Castle Community College meeting on 18 October 2012 attended by approximately 150 people including parents, staff, governors and other interested parties

Parents

If the merger goes ahead, how will students be divided across both sites from next September?

- Mr Philip Bunn responded by saying that the Year 7 pupils would definitely be accommodated on the Castle Community College site and joint planning for the continued use of both sites was underway. It was not possible to give a definitive answer at this stage.

If the merger goes ahead will students be able to continue their Maritime studies at the new school?

- Mr Philip Bunn responded that students would be able to continue their Maritime studies if the proposal goes ahead.

Other Comments

- The primary rolls are rising, so the secondary rolls will.
- Home to school transport is being revoked and parents will not be able to afford transport to Sandwich and Dover secondary schools.
- Concerned about the additional traffic in Mill Road if the Academy is expanded and the distance that students will have to travel to school.

- Concerned that the merger would affect the students' grades.
- We chose this school because it is a small school.
- The money to rebuild Castle Community College should be shared between the schools in order to retain them both
- Concerns about how the children would settle into a large school, especially those with special educational needs and would they get enough support.
- Concerns were raised about bullying if the merger went ahead.
- Concern that if the merger does not go ahead Walmer Science College will just be left to fail.

Student

- Concerned about the impact of the merger on students' grades as Community College is doing very well.
- Why can't the money from Government to rebuild Castle Community College be used for both schools rather than creating one larger school?

Interested Parties

Why suppress the fact that this is the closure of Walmer Science College?

- Mrs Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer responded by saying that the governors had been anxious to avoid the word 'closure'. There has to be a technical closure of one school and the expansion of another as the legal way of achieving the amalgamation

Would staff transferring to the Academy be at a disadvantage?

- Mr Philip Bunn, Executive Principal responded that staff would remain on the same terms and conditions.

Assurances were sought that the Walmer Science College site would not be sold for housing development.

- Mr Kevin Shovelton, Director of Education Planning and Access responded that nothing had been decided about the future use of the site but there were sound ideas coming forward from the two meetings that KCC should be listening to.

The rising birth rate and Dover District Council's plans for new houses in the district were raised.

- Mrs Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer responded by saying that KCC had looked closely at the data provided to KCC on the birth rate in the district, Dover District Council's housing trajectory and the current and future numbers of secondary pupils in the locality.

Would the new school fund changes to school uniform so that parents would not incur the cost?

- Mr Philip Bunn, Executive Headteacher responded that the any changes to the uniform would be funded by the Academy.

Would Maritime studies continue as promised to Princess Anne?

- Mr Philip Bunn, Executive Principal responded that the course would continue and he would like to see it developed for the future but as with any new course, there can be no guarantees.

Would the Academy sell the Walmer Science College site?

- Mrs Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer responded that the Academy could not sell the land as it is owned by KCC and would be subject to a short term lease to the Academy Trust. During this time the community would be included in any discussions regarding the future of the site.

Other Comments

- The intake has dropped at Walmer because it was a failing school, but is now improving and numbers will go up again.
- It is not the size of the school that matters, it is the strength of the leadership and for an outstanding school you need outstanding staff.
- Academies are not community schools, they are independent schools run by an Academy Trust.

Governors

If this proposal does not go ahead, would it still be the plan to rebuild Castle Community College with the money from the Government?

- Mr Philip Bunn, Executive Principal responded that the Government had allocated the funding to rebuild Castle Community College to its original capacity which is 1,200-1,300 students and the project would still go ahead.

Other Comments

- The merger will bring better curriculum opportunities and better support for the students.
- Children do respond well to change and already work well together in the 6th form.
- The local press has not reported this proposal accurately or fairly.

**The Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School)
and Castle Community College (Academy)**

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: 2,500
Responses received: 491

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers – Castle	13	20	0	33
Parents/Carers – Walmer	0	54	1	55
Parents/Carers – unspecified	5	12	0	17
Students – Castle	1	3	0	4
Students – Walmer	20	284	1	305
Students – unspecified	0	5	6	11
Governors	2	0	0	2
Members of staff – Castle	11	1	0	12
Members of staff – Walmer	0	5	0	5
Members of staff – unspecified	0	3	0	3
Interested parties	5	38	1	44
Total responses received *	57	425	9	491

A survey carried out by the Kent Messenger Group was forwarded to Alison Osborne which contained 96 responses; 85 against the proposal, 4 for the proposal and 7 undecided.

Mr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for ELS was presented with a petition when he met with the Dover Mercury newspaper on 31 October. The petition was signed by 640 people opposing the proposal, approximately 400 of whom indicated that they lived in the Deal/Walmer locality

A petition was received at Clover House addressed to Alison Osborne from the 'Save Walmer Science College Group' with 2000 plus signatures opposing the proposal. Presented with the petition was an alternative proposal disagreeing with the evidence provided during the public consultation on the predicted number of pupils coming forward in the future. It proposed that Walmer Science College should be allowed to continue to operate under a new structure with a new headteacher, seeking sponsorship, possibly becoming an academy, allowing the continuation of choice for parents. A copy of this

proposal and any of the responses, are available for Members to see in the Members lounge.

Response from Deal Town Council

Deal Town Council strongly objects to the proposal on the grounds that sufficient information has not been provided and concern that any future failure of the expanded academy could result in it being passed to another managing body. The Council also raised concerns about the future of the Walmer site should the proposal go ahead and sought reassurance that the site would continue to be used for educational purposes.

Response from Walmer Parish Council

Having considered both sides of the argument, listened to local residents and the personal experiences of councillors themselves, Walmer Parish Council is of the opinion that it is against the closure of any educational facility in Walmer.

Parents

In support of the proposal

- This proposal will bring increased chances and a wider variety of opportunities for the young people in Deal/Walmer.
- Bringing the two schools together will put a stop to the 'them and us' mentality in the area.
- The proposal should go ahead to raise standards for all students in Deal and Walmer.
- Walmer Science College is currently not fit for purpose.
- There will be some, very regrettable but inevitable, disruption in the short to medium term but the alternatives would create an even more desperate situation for the pupils attending Walmer Science College
- The staff of Walmer Science College deserves the opportunity to prove, that, with the right leadership, they can perform to the standards which the pupils deserve.
- Another main entrance would be needed for Castle Community College when the school is rebuilt. A bigger entrance in Brunswick Terrace /Hamilton Road.
- I would prefer that the resources are targeted towards maintaining an already outstanding school and making it even better.
- The new school must have the capacity to accommodate future increases in pupil numbers long term, as one would hope that the school's success will also attract more pupils whose parents may have previously looked out of the immediate Deal area.

Against the proposal

- The situation is due to change in the next five years or so as the very large intake currently stretching primary schools to the limit will feed through.
- Parents in Deal and Walmer have for decades been able to exercise choice between the two schools and it is plainly wrong that this should be withdrawn.
- Parents should have a choice between Castle, doing sports and drama and Walmer, a maths and science college.
- Walmer Science College should be allowed to go it alone as an Academy if it is not possible to leave it just as it is.
- A federation arrangement could be made with other schools allowing Walmer to remain intact and with a great degree of autonomy.
- I feel if the school becomes bigger the individual care these children need will be overseen because they will be numbers in a vast school.

- We value what is here right now and we want investment to be in the two sites, not in creating one large new school.
- Bigger is not always better! Surely with co-operation between the two schools it should be possible to continue to offer a good range of subjects across the two sites without the need to merge the schools.
- The students would be working in an unsettled and difficult environment, which will lead to a drop in performance.
- The prospect of our child's secondary education being undertaken on a huge building site, together with an over populated pupil intake is not one that we would wish to be part of.
- If this happens there will be animosity and conflict between the students of the two schools leading to bullying.
- Walmer Science College has had a lot of money spent on it recently improving the school and facilities, including the Maritime Centre. Will this not be a complete waste if this goes ahead?
- The new courses to do with seafaring are probably long overdue in this area and there is no doubt that they will attract pupils, increasing numbers especially for sixth form. Viability of the Walmer Science College would then not be in question.
- Our children have already had to go through a primary school merger and we do not want to put our children through this again.
- Walmer Science College has improved dramatically in the last year and should be allowed to continue to do so.
- This proposal is all about saving money.
- I am very concerned that the merger will jeopardise the small school values and standards that are so very much cherished by us.
- It wasn't that long ago that Walmer was the school of choice. The main reason numbers have dropped is due to the failings in the school and not a lack of children in the area.
- This proposal will already affect Walmer Science College with the ability to recruit and retain staff and attract new students for future intakes. This in turn will affect curriculum development and the opportunities available.
- When the new housing projects start, where are all of the children going?
- As parents have to pay travel expenses for their children to go to the grammar schools and St. Edmund's, possibly more children will have to go to the Deal schools, because some parents will not be able to afford the charges.

Students

In support of the proposal

- It would be better for our education.
- It will be good to get to see our old friends again.
- I agree, but please keep the Maritime Studies open as it is a brilliant opportunity.

Against the Proposal

- We need two schools within this area as it gives both parents and students an option as to where they would like to study.
- There will be lots of fighting because Walmer and Castle students have always been rivals.
- The intake at Walmer will be a lot higher in 2013 due to our Maritime Studies Centre and new facilities which are much better than Castle's.
- There will be many staff redundancies – this will cause big problems and will have such a negative effect on peoples' lives.

- Please listen to the students and not only put Kent First, but Kent's Youth.
- Walmer Science College managed to come out of special measures in one year, so the school must be doing something right.
- The staff has worked very hard to improve Walmer.
- The transport and new uniform will cost our parents a fortune.
- I have grown comfortable in Walmer and sometimes refer to it as my second home.
- If the proposal goes ahead there will be too many pupils in a class.
- This will interfere with our GCSE's because of the stress of moving around and learning new things.
- I am worried about how this will affect my education as teachers that have planned my courses would have to leave.
- When we were visited by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, she was very pleased with our school and the students but mostly the new Maritime Centre.
- It is good to have the two separate schools if only you would give us a chance. Just give us a couple of more years as we are on the path to becoming great again.
- Walmer is offering lots of new opportunities to try to bring students in. Why can't the proposal wait to see if this works?
- If the merger does happen, please don't allow the school to have the Castle name and uniform.
- With planned new housing in Sholden, the population of Deal is only going to rise.
- There will be vast amounts of disruption and larger classes, especially whilst the new proposed building is under construction.
- You may 'promise' that there are no plans for the Walmer site to become a housing estate but we cannot believe there is no ulterior motive.
- The Maritime and Engineering courses might stop if the merger goes ahead.
- As Year 10 and 11 students are doing their GCSEs, having to merge with another school where the students may have already learned different things, we may end up missing a bit of the course, which may jeopardise pupil's chances of passing.

Other comments

- I don't mind joining but I just don't want all the hassle of having to move and most of the teachers losing their jobs.

Staff

For the Proposal

- Walmer Science College is not financially viable and cannot offer the standard of education to which students and parents are entitled.
- When the opportunity for success at one small school is shrinking and at the other soaring, it is against good judgement for the merger not to happen.
- It will provide the community with fantastic opportunities in the future.
- I have seen the benefits of bringing the two schools together for the sixth form and the students have integrated without issue.
- The proposal offers equal opportunities for all young people of Deal.
- Better facilities will be provided for staff and students and there will be a further feel of "community".

Against the Proposal

- Staff will lose their jobs.
- Small schools are better, less children in classes.
- Reduced staffing will mean that class sizes will increase significantly.
- Taking choice away is a big negative for the community.

- The access to Castle is appalling, with increased numbers of pupils, this can only cause massive disruption and congestion to traffic.
- Losing staff from one school and not at the other doesn't seem fair.
- The pupils at Walmer have had enough disruption over the last few years, and have come through it admirably, but they don't deserve any more.
- Very short-sighted, with not much thought for staff or students at Walmer.

Governors

For the Proposal

- We know that if we do not act now the school will eventually become unviable.
- The results at Walmer were extremely disappointing for students, how many students did not achieve their full potential.
- Walmer Science College is in a critical position.

Other Interested Parties*

For the Proposal

- Neither of the current schools is educationally viable and even with a future increase of pupil numbers coming through from the primary phase, one, properly staffed and equipped secondary school will meet the town's needs far better than two small schools.
- The Academy system is going to offer the opportunity for greater funding.
- The reduction in student numbers leads to loss of money and the reduction in the ability to hire a truly good headteacher. The calibre of this person defines the quality of the school.
- The expanded Academy must offer a strong programme in Maths, Sciences and Technology to balance the Arts bias presently at Castle Community College.

Against the Proposal

- Reducing to one school leaves no room for major expansion or allowance for an increase in school population.
- Merging the two schools will create problems in Mill Road and become unbearable for people living in the road.
- Both small schools should be kept, as a small school can help foster an understanding and appreciation between teachers and pupils and supports the well disciplined and courteous behaviour of the students.
- Creating one school definitely deprives parents of choice.
- With an academy there will be no controls of the syllabus or administration of the school.
- Suggested option if the merger goes ahead: Year 7 and 8 should be sited at Castle – where the children could be given greater pastoral care and be nurtured more. Year 9 onwards should be sited at Walmer – where they will have grown wings to fly, offering a wide range of courses and activities.

**These parties cannot be attributed to individuality as this contravenes the Data Protection Act 1998*

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By: Paul Carter, Leader of the Council
Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

To: Scrutiny Committee – 12 December 2012

Subject: Select Committee - Apprenticeships

Summary: This report proposes the establishment of a Select Committee which is supported by all three Group Leaders to look at the County Council's Apprenticeship Scheme and make recommendations to the County Council on 28 March 2013.

1. Introduction

(1) At the County Council meeting on 25 October 2012 the County Council noted that, when the National Apprenticeship Service published its figures for apprenticeships across the South East, Kent was far and beyond all other authorities in the South East of England with a massive and dramatic increase in the number of apprenticeships, some 39% more young people aged 16-25 in modern apprenticeships than the 12 months before that, showing the build up and success of Kent Jobs for Kent Young People.

(2) Mrs Dean agreed with Mr Carter that the increase in the number of apprenticeships in Kent in the past twelve months was very good news but said that she would like to see a report about how the demand and supply was being met.

(3) Mr Christie agreed with the views expressed by the Leader and Mrs Dean

(4) The Leader informed the Council that he would be happy for a report to be prepared which would cover:

- (a) The demand and supply across Kent for apprenticeships;
- (b) How the apprenticeship programme supported particularly vulnerable people into apprenticeships;
- (c) The outcome and quality of the apprenticeships provided; and
- (d) What the experience was like for both the employers and the apprentices.

(5) The Leader said that getting closer to the Council's customers, the employers and the young people, was absolutely essential.

2. Select Committee

(1) To take this work forward it is proposed that a Select Committee is established to undertake a short review and report to the County Council on 28 March 2013.

(2) The Leader of the County Council has asked Mr K Smith, who chaired “The Student Journey Select Committee”, to chair the Select Committee because of the synergy with this Select Committee.

(3) Having consulted the three Group Leaders the proposed membership of the Select Committee is as follows:

Mr Kit Smith, Chairman Designate
Mr Robert Bird
Mr Alan Chell
Mr David Hirst
Mr Steve Manion
Mr Michael Northey
Mrs Carole Waters
Mr Leslie Christie
Mr Richard Lees (co-opted Member)

(4) Attached as an Appendix to this report is the very first draft of the terms of reference for the Select Committee and the programme which will culminate in a report to the County Council on 28 March 2013.

3. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to approve the establishment of a Select Committee, with the Membership set out in sub paragraph 2 (2) to examine and make recommendations on the County Council’s Apprenticeship Scheme as set out in the draft terms of reference attached to this report.

Apprenticeships Select Committee

Terms of Reference and Scope

Please note the Terms of Reference within this document are subject to agreement by the Select Committee on the 18th December.

Introduction

Young people are the future of England and its economy. Raising their aspirations and creating the right opportunities to enhance their skills and attitudes in order to enter sustainable employment are crucial both for their independence and the quality of their lives, as well as for the country's economic recovery and growth.

Addressing the employability of young people is a critical task if we want to contribute to the country's economic recovery as well as provide the best possible prospects for future generations of workers in Kent.

Kent County Council recognises the importance placed upon apprenticeships by employers, young people and government at both a local and national level and has taken a major lead in the progress Kent has made towards increasing the number of apprenticeships, which now stand at around 10,000.

Following the undertaking of the Student Journey Select Committee review over the past year, which explored ways to improve the employability of young people in Kent, it was decided to organise a shorter review which will investigate in greater detail the issue of apprenticeships across the County.

The Apprenticeships Select Committee has been tasked with making recommendations to the Council that can help to ensure that in the future, apprenticeships in Kent will:-

1. Meet the needs of a changing economy.
2. Provide sustainable pathways for young people into jobs via relevant skills acquisition.
3. Consistently achieve professionally recognised high quality qualifications and skills which employers and learners need.

Committee Membership

The Select Committee consists of eight elected Members of Kent County Council:

Rob Bird

Alan Chell

Les Christie

David Hirst

Steve Manion

Michael Northey

Kit Smith (Chairman Designate)

Carol Waters

An additional Member of Kent County Council, Mr Richard Lees, has been co-opted to the Select Committee.

Terms of Reference

1. To explore apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU, and to consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
2. To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent and consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted.
3. To examine the current quality of apprenticeships in Kent, and explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
4. For the Apprenticeships Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

Scope

The breadth and complexity of this topic requires a clear and focused approach, especially when looking to the future. Possible key themes and aspects to be covered by the review are detailed below:

1. To explore apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU, and to consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.

- a. To explore the present landscape of apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU.
 - b. To consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
2. To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent and consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted.
- a. To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent.
 - b. To consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted.
3. To examine the current quality of apprenticeships in Kent, and explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
- a. To examine the suitability of current skills and qualifications provided by apprenticeships within Kent.
 - b. To explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
4. To consider the role of Kent County Council in implementing suggestions put forward in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships.
- a. To consider the implications of the Richard Review for apprenticeships in Kent.
 - b. To explore the ways in which Kent County Council can implement suggestions from the Richard Review in Kent.
5. For the Apprenticeships Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

Timetable

Please note this timetable is subject to change in order to enable more than the 3 days of 8-11 January for hearings and to allow time for rapporteur reporting by Members. Attempts will also be made to reduce the excessive period from February 4th to March 28th to allow 5 more working days headroom for essential report writing, editing and production of the first draft.

18 December 2012: First meeting of Select Committee, to appoint the Chairman and to discuss and agree the Terms of Reference of the review.

19-23 December: Contact and organise hearings and visits.

8-11 January 2013: Hearings (2 maximum, involving up to 6 interviews).

15-17 January: Committee meets to identify key issues and to make recommendations.

21 January-1 February: Report writing, production of first draft.

4 February: Committee discusses the first draft of the report and suggests amendments. Amendments carried out accordingly.

7 February: Select Committee to share the report with Cabinet Members and Corporate Director(s).

11 February: Despatch for Corporate Board meeting.

18 February: Report considered by Corporate Board

8 March: Despatch for Cabinet. The report becomes “public”.

18 March: Report presented to Cabinet.

19 March: Despatch for County Council.

28 March: Report presented to County Council.

REPORT CAN NOW BE FORMALLY PUBLISHED AND LAUNCHED

3 months after publication: Scrutiny Committee will receive an action plan from the Directorates setting out how they plan to implement the report’s recommendations.

12 months after publication: Select Committee reconvenes to review a report from the Directorates about one-year-on progress on the recommendations. Progress is reported to the Scrutiny Committee.

This first 12 month review marks the end of the process as currently established

Witnesses (oral/written evidence)

Evidence may be requested from the following:

- Statistically valid data and appropriate research methodology.
- Students and young people involved in apprenticeships.
- Employers and organisations representing businesses.
- Representatives of secondary schools and Further Education colleges.
- Representatives of additional external organisations that can contribute with information and evidence to The Apprenticeships Select Committee.
- KCC senior officers, particularly those involved in employment and apprenticeships for young people.

- Representatives of additional external organisations that can contribute with information and evidence to The Apprenticeships Select Committee.
- Academics, professionals, other witnesses who can make relevant contributions.

Members Rapporteur Reporting

It is anticipated that a system of Member Rapporteur reporting could be used to gather evidence from a wide base of apprenticeship stakeholders.

Site Visits

Visits may be organised by the committee as part of the evidence gathering process.

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Agenda Item C1

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