

By: ROSALIND TURNER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

To: SARAH HOHLER – CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION

Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF WILMINGTON ENTERPRISE COLLEGE AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY.

Classification: UNRESTRICTED

Summary:	The Cabinet Member is requested to agree to issue a public notice to close Wilmington Enterprise College and its replacement with a government funded Academy.
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## Introduction

1. The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 7 January 2010 supported a proposal to consult on the proposal proposed closure of Wilmington Enterprise College and its replacement with a government funded Academy

## The Proposal

2. (1) It is proposed that the Academy will replace Wilmington Enterprise College. Academy will be part of a hard federation with the Leigh Technology Academy and the Longfield Academy. It is proposed that the Leigh Academies Trust will become the sole legal body responsible and the lead sponsors with Kent County Council as co-sponsors.

(2) Following discussions with Wilmington Enterprise College IEB, local schools, councillors and stakeholders, the Leigh Academies Trust was chosen as lead sponsor because they have the capacity, through the Leigh Academy and the Longfield Academy, to manage the school improvement issues at Wilmington Enterprise College. This was deemed to be the most appropriate option, as capacity, locality and expertise were the deciding factors in the local authority commissioning the Leigh Academies Trust to provide an outstanding education and learning experience for young people in Dartford West into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

[3] Most importantly, the Local Authority, is the guardian of standards for all current and future students. As a consequence the structural solution for a swift and decisive change was commissioned.

(4) It is proposed that the new Academy will open in September 2010 on the existing site and premises. The Published Admission Number will be 150, with a capacity of 750 with up to 200 post 16 places. Longer term, we would broadly expect a new build would be provided for the Academy. The new buildings are expected to be built for completion in September 2013 on the same site, adjacent to the current premises.

- (5) The academy will be at the core of the community and will be characterised by:
- creating an environment that automatically has high expectations for all.
  - having the highest standards of behaviour and commitment.
  - developing an enthusiasm for learning by creating a modern, challenging curriculum.
  - creating a culture of continuous improvement.
  - developing its distinctive approach to creating excellence in education by working in close partnership with the Leigh Technology Academy and Longfield Academy.
  - enabling a greater proportion of young people to achieve the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for our Knowledge Society.

(6) The vision for the Wilmington Academy is that it will establish an outstanding Academy that will develop new first class approaches to education. The Academy will instil a pride in and love of learning, motivating students to aim high, become skilled and flexible learners and develop into socially, emotionally and behaviourally confident citizens, employees and employers. The Academy will have a particular focus on vocational education creating a mix of academic and vocational experience.

## **The Consultation**

3. (1) The consultation process began on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and finished on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

(2) A consultation document was circulated according to the County Procedures for Review. This circulation included Local Members, Dartford and Gravesham Borough Council, Sevenoaks Council, London Boroughs of Bexley and Bromley, local Parish Councils, DCSF, SEEDA, LSC, the local libraries, Members of Parliament, Trade Unions, all SOAB members, all Dartford Members, KCC Officers and all Dartford and Swanley Primary and Secondary Schools.

(3) Wilmington Enterprise College was sent enough copies for all staff, governors, parents and carers to receive one. Attached to the consultation document was a reply form for respondents to express their views. Approximately 2900 copies of the document were circulated.

(4) The document can be viewed on the KCC website at:  
<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/education-and-learning/plans-and-consultations/education-consultations/cons-Wilmington%20PCD1-2010.pdf>

(5) A public meeting was held at Wilmington Enterprise College on 1st February 2010. Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were: Simon Webb, Area Children's Services Officer for Dartford and Gravesham; Mrs Jane Wheatley, Executive Head Teacher, Wilmington Enterprise College; Mr Frank Green, Chief Executive Officer, Leigh Academies Trust; Mr Mark Poulter, Head of School, Wilmington Enterprise College and Mrs Janice Brooke Chair of Interim Executive Board for Wilmington Enterprise College. Cllr Ann Allen attended as the local elected member for Wilmington and as a member of the Interim Executive Board.

About 150 members of the public attended.

## **Responses to the Public Consultation**

### *Written Responses*

4. 44 responses were received, of which 21 are in favour, 11 are undecided and 12 are opposed.

## **Views of Local Members**

5. The Local Member for the County Division where Wilmington Enterprise College is sited is Mrs Ann Allen. Mrs Allen said:

"With reference to this report, I would say that I welcome and support the proposals as a positive and constructive way forward for the pupils and staff of Wilmington Enterprise College."

## **Views of the Interim Executive Board**

6. [1] Following the resignation of the governing body of Wilmington Enterprise College, delegated authority is now vested in a local authority Interim Executive Board (IEB).

(2) Their response is as follows:

- (a) The IEB were, naturally, disappointed that their tenure was expected to be ended after only one year, however, they are not opposed in principle to an Academy being established on the site.
- (b) The process for change has been outlined to the IEB, however, they believe the Local Authority have moved too swiftly for all the necessary arrangements to be in place by September.
- (c) They recognise that the new facilities being built will enhance teaching and learning and are a significant benefit to the students, along with the enhanced budget which an Academy is entitled to.

### **Views of the Main Sponsor**

7. The Leigh Academies Trust are in full support of this proposal.

### **Views of Local Member of Parliament**

8. The Local Member of Parliament is Dr Howard Stoate. Dr Stoate and MPs from adjacent wards have been informed of the proposal.

### **Views of Dartford Borough Council**

9. Dartford Borough Council has been fully informed of the proposal.

### **Views of the Local Children's Services Partnership**

10. The Partnership has been informed of the proposal and is fully supportive.

### **The Views of the School Organisation Advisory Board**

11. The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 17 March 2010 unanimously supported the proposal to issue a public notice to close Wilmington Enterprise College. The report is attached as appendix 1

### **Recommendation**

12. The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education is requested to agree to issue a public notice to close Wilmington Enterprise College and to replace it with a government-funded Academy

Simon Webb  
Area Children's Services Officer  
Dartford & Gravesham  
Tel 01732 525110

The local member is Mrs Ann Allen

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*Background Documents:*

*None*

*Previous Committee report*

School Organisation Advisory Board – 7 January 2010

School Organisation Advisory Board – 17 March 2010