

## **Cabinet – 13 January 2010**

### **Sneyd Community School – Determination of statutory proposal**

**Portfolio:** Councillor R Walker, Children's Services

**Service:** Walsall Children's Services - Serco

**Wards:** All Walsall wards but particularly Bloxwich West, Bloxwich East, Willenhall North, Willenhall South and Short Heath

**Key decision:** Yes

**Forward plan:** Yes

#### **1. Summary of report**

1.1 This report provides information to enable Cabinet to decide whether it wishes to approve the statutory proposal to close Sneyd Community School from 31 August 2012.

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That Cabinet approves the statutory proposal to discontinue (close) Sneyd Community School from 31 August 2012.

#### **3. Background information**

3.1 On 21 October 2009, Cabinet considered a report on the outcome of consultation on a single option for the future of Sneyd Community School and after detailed consideration of the matter approved the publication of a statutory proposal to discontinue (close) Sneyd Community School from 31 August 2012.

3.2 A statutory notice was published on 6 November 2009 and a copy of this is included in Appendix A. The transitional arrangements were detailed in an explanatory note which was published as part of the notice. The key elements are:

- 1 *It is proposed to close Sneyd Community School from 31 August 2012.*
- 2 *All pupils on roll at Sneyd will be offered a place at another school with available places when they reach the end of their current key stage.*
- 3 *Current education provision at Sneyd Community School will cease on 31 August 2012. No pupils will be admitted to Year 7 or the sixth form in September 2010 and subsequent years. Pupils who started Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 will complete their key stage at*

*Sneyd. At the end of their current key stage pupils will transfer on a year on year basis to places at other schools in the borough.*

- 4 *All pupils currently on roll in Key Stage 3 (Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9) will be offered a place in Year 10 at another school with available places. Pupils currently in Year 9 will transfer to another school in September 2010, those currently in Year 8 will transfer in September 2011 and those currently in Year 7 will transfer in September 2012.*
- 5 *Support will be available for pupils currently on roll in Key Stage 4 who wish to join a sixth form at another school in Walsall. Pupils currently in Year 11 will transfer in September 2010; pupils currently in Year 10 will transfer in September 2011. Support will also be available for pupils who wish to apply for places at other Post 16 provision.*

3.3 Details of previous reports on this matter are provided in the 'Background Papers' section.

3.4 Detailed information relating to pupil numbers, standards (including an update following the recent HMI monitoring visit) and viability are provided below.

### 3.5 Pupil numbers

3.5.1 Any consideration of the future of Sneyd must be set in the context of the trend in pupil numbers at the school and the projected demand for places over the coming years.

3.5.2 Pupil numbers at Sneyd were relatively stable between 2001 and 2005 and peaked at 1,395 in 2005. Since then numbers have fallen by 27% over a three year period to 1,016 in January 2008. Table 1 below provides more details of the decline in numbers. The projected number on roll in January 2010 is based on data for September 2009 which shows a fall of 200 from January 2009; projections for following years are based on Year 7 admissions of 70 (as in September 2009).

Table 1 Trend in pupil numbers at Sneyd

January Census	Sneyd NOR	Reduction in pupil numbers from previous year	
2001	1,384		
2002	1,368		
2003	1,380		
2004	1,386		
2005	1,395		
2006	1,269	- 126	9%
2007	1,156	- 113	9%
2008	1,015	-141	12%
2009	893	- 122	12%
<b>Projections</b>			
2010	690	These projections are based on numbers on roll in September 2009.	
2011	574		
2012	494		
2013	460		

3.5.3 The number of pupils admitted to Year 7 has reduced over this period and this is illustrated in Table 2 below which provides details of the number of pupils in each year group in September 2009.

Table 2 Pupil numbers by year group at Sneyd (September 2009)

	Adm no	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Total
Sneyd	250	70	101	104	150	186	57	22	690

3.5.4 Analysis of the 2009 admissions round shows that of the 3,692 applications, there are 57 first preferences for Sneyd. Details of the preferences for Sneyd are provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Preferences for Sneyd, 2009 Admission Round

	1 <sup>st</sup> preference	2nd preference	3 <sup>rd</sup> preference	4 <sup>th</sup> preference	5 <sup>th</sup> preference	Total preferences
Sneyd	57	60	39	18	4	178
Walsall schools	3,692	2,317	1,436	753	499	8,697

Data as at March 2009

3.5.5 In March 2009, 104 places were offered at Sneyd for September 2009; the actual intake into Year 7 was 70. As this intake replaced a Year 11 cohort of 226, this had a major impact on pupil numbers. In addition, some parents of pupils in other year groups have made alternative arrangements for the secondary education of their children and taken up places at other schools in Walsall and in neighbouring authorities. This major reduction in pupil numbers of approximately 200 since January 2009 will result in a very significant reduction in the revenue funding the school receives.

3.5.6 Since the above projections were produced, there has been a further fall in the number of pupils on roll at Sneyd. Between 1 October 2009 (date of the PLASC) and 10 December 2009, 26 pupils left Sneyd; almost all of these were in Year 9 (see Table 4 below).

Table 4 Pupil numbers at Sneyd; Oct and Dec 2009

Date	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y7-Y11 total	Y12	Y13	Y14	Post 16 total	Grand total
1 Oct 2009	70	99	93	144	186	592	40	21	3	64	656
10 Dec 2009	69	97	74	142	184	566	44	18	2	64	630

3.5.7 Sneyd does not have feeder schools however, traditionally, a large number of pupils have transferred from Mossley, Beacon, Abbey and Busill Jones Primary Schools. There has been a marked reduction in the number of first preferences from pupils at Busill Jones and Woodlands over the last three years and it is likely that this is in part a reflection of changes in the relative popularity of secondary schools and also the increasing ease of securing a place at other local schools because of the overall reduced demand for places. It is envisaged that this trend will continue.

3.5.8 Year-on-year reductions of this magnitude create a situation which is very difficult for schools to manage effectively especially where a school is struggling to make the necessary improvements to raise standards to at least a satisfactory level and where pupils are achieving their potential.

### 3.6 School Standards and Effectiveness

3.6.1 Sneyd is a National Challenge School. Rapid improvement is required by the government at National Challenge Schools to ensure that 30% of more pupils achieve five good grades at GCSE (or equivalent) including English and mathematics by 2011. Confidence in the school sustaining improvement and attaining the national expectation by 2011 is low at present (as indicated by both the Black Country Challenge and School Improvement Advisers). Failure to perform above this level in 2011 would result in a direction from the Secretary of State.

3.6.2 For a long period, Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College has failed to provide a high quality learning environment in which standards and quality of learning are sustained at a level that is satisfactory or better. Although Sneyd has been working to improve educational standards at the school for a number of years with additional support from the local authority and the Black Country Challenge, standards remain inadequate.

3.6.3 The school was first placed in an Ofsted category in 2005 when special measures were required. The 2005 report noted low standards and poor quality of teaching. In November 2006, after a period of substantial support, the school was removed from special measures and deemed satisfactory. However, improvements made by the school during this intervention were not sustained and a further inspection by Ofsted in November 2008 determined that the school required significant improvement and Sneyd was given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvements to teaching, education standards and also to sixth form provision are required. To date, improvement at Sneyd has only been identified as satisfactory both by Ofsted (May 2009) and by the Local Authority.

3.6.4 Standards are significantly lower than at similar schools. As full comparative data for 2009 will not be available for some time yet, the following data also relates to 2008. The 2008 Key Stage 4 results were disappointing and show a downward trend over the last two years. At 19% 5+A\*-C (including English and maths), the school is in the **bottom 9% of all secondary schools in the country**. The three year improvement trend (Table 5 below) shows that there

has been no evidence of sustained improvement on this indicator. Whilst Walsall has improved at over twice the national rate of improvement, Sneyd School has actually declined over that same period.

Table 5 GCSE Results  
(% achieving 5+ A\* - C (or equivalent) including English and mathematics)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	Improvement	
					2006-2008	2006-2009
Sneyd	20%	17%	19%	26.5%*	- 1%	6.5%*
Walsall	34.8%	35.5%	40.6%	43.1%*	+ 5.8%	8.3%*
National	45.3%	46.3%	47.6%	NA	+ 2.3%	NA

NA: not yet available \*Unvalidated

- 3.6.5 Sneyd's Contextual Value Added score (the score that compares pupil progress in the school to all students nationally) from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 of 961.3 places them as one of the **lowest 1% of schools in the country**. National data shows that for all pupils (with the exception of lower ability girls in science) the school's outcomes for the past three years have been **significantly below what was expected**. In many cases the 2008 results were significantly below those of the previous year. Sneyd has the second lowest average point score for A levels in the borough. More detailed comparative data for achievement at KS3 and GCSE is provided in Appendix B.
- 3.6.6 Unvalidated Key Stage 3 results in English, mathematics and science in 2009 were higher than in previous years; only English results met or exceeded the targets set by the school.
- 3.6.7 Unvalidated results for 2009 show improvement on the key GCSE measures although the school still remains below the 30% national benchmark for pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics. Confidence in the school sustaining improvement and attaining the national expectation of 30% by 2011 is low at present as the improvement evident in the 2009 results reflected high levels of support from the local authority and Black Country Challenge in addition to the school's own efforts. At KS4 the achievement of 5+A\*-C including English and mathematics was 28%, close to the target of 30%. The achievement for 5+A\*-G and for 5+A\*-G including English and mathematics decreased. The levels achieved are still below the unvalidated average for LA schools, but the gap has closed compared to previous years. Failure to perform above this level in 2011 would result in a direction from the Secretary of State. The school does not demonstrate a history of being able to sustain and build upon improvement following a period of significant intervention and this remains of concern to the Local Authority.
- 3.6.8 The Post 16 results have improved however, the partnership arrangements for the delivery of post 16 courses with Pool Hayes will continue in the 2009/10 academic year for Year 13 pupils only
- 3.6.9 Based on the most recent published national data (see Table 6 below) Sneyd school also has a high proportion of pupil absence.

Table 6 Absence levels

	Absence	Persistent absence (pupils with 20% or more absence from school)
Sneyd	9.6%	10.8%
Walsall	7.5%	6.7%
National	7.4%	6.6%

3.6.10 Over the last year a significant amount of **additional support** has been provided to the school and details of this are provided in Table 7 below. Additional funding of £83,500 has been focused on supporting pupils learning and a wide range of support from the Local Authority, National Strategy and Black Country consultants has been provided to teachers and leaders in the school.

Table 7 Additional support for Sneyd

By the Local Authority	By the Black Country Challenge (includes reference to programmes as well as individual support)
Science review; teaching and learning quality assurance; raising attainment in maths and science; regular performance impact reviews.  National strategies Regional Adviser support for English; local authority consultancy support for English.  Weekly consultancy support for maths.  ICT consultancy support KS4 and KS5  £20,000 for learning mentor; tracking and interventions (EIW); £12,500 for raising achievement at KS4 (NRF)  Education Welfare Service provides additional sessions from an Attendance Support Worker to target the high rate of persistent absence with a focus on all pupils whose attendance is between 80% – 85%.	£25,000 Academic coach for mathematics  £26,000 Academic mentor and training  Support from Shire Oak (NCSL/LLE)  Leadership and Management training (NCSL)

3.6.11 Whilst there has been satisfactory progress in addressing the issues, as recognised by Ofsted in May 2009, significant improvement is still required if the school is to perform at or above the expected national threshold level of 30% of pupils achieving 5+A\*- C (or equivalent) including English and mathematics in 2011.

### 3.7 Viability

3.7.1 The number of pupils at Sneyd is in decline, irrespective of the consultation proposal, and this is having a direct impact on the funding available to meet the annual running costs of the school, and the school's ability to deliver a viable education service. The other financial consequence of falling rolls at the school is that the cost per Sneyd pupil, to the Schools Budget, is increasing significantly, as highlighted in Table 7, below.

3.7.2 As the number of pupils on roll reduces, so does the funding delegated to the school. Inevitably, the quality of the education available to the pupils is affected during such a period because both the fixed costs of the school, and the delegated budget share allocated to the school, increasingly comprise a greater proportion of the school's resources. This is exemplified in Table 8 below which shows the delegated budget share allocations, at pupil unit level. Increasing as pupil numbers reduce, for both pupil-led and school and site specific factors. The impact of Sneyd's falling rolls on the operation of the delegated budget share formulae means that places at Sneyd schools are becoming very costly at the expense of all other pupils in the borough. We now know that pupil numbers at Sneyd have reduced more quickly than anticipated and this will increase even further the cost per pupil to the School's Budget during a possible closure period.

Table 8 Delegated budget share allocations

Pupil numbers	Pupil led delegated funding per pupil	School and site specific delegated funding per pupil	<b>Total delegated funding per pupil</b>	Annual increase in cost per pupil (base year 2009-10)	Additional cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant
	£	£	£	£	£
798 *	3,533	794	<b>4,327</b>	0	0
668 **	3,821	934	<b>4,755</b>	428	285,904
358 **	3,945	1,615	<b>5,561</b>	806	288,548
100 **	5,643	5,542	<b>11,185</b>	5,624	562,400
Total additional cost over 4 years					1,136,852

Notes to table

- \* budget share allocation based upon 2009-10 actual budget share values
- \*\* budget share allocations based upon the estimated 2010-11 budget share values
- The figures exclude LSC funded post 16 pupils and SEN costs for named pupils

3.7.3 The school's 2010-11 original, draft budget submitted to the authority, initially highlighted a deficit of approximately £660,000 (based upon a school population of 668 which included an intake to Y7 of 100 pupils in September 2009) if no action was taken to reduce costs in the school. As the majority of costs are staffing related, then this is the budget area which needs the closest scrutiny. Since the school identified this potential budget deficit, the pupil numbers have reduced even further and there are now 611 pupils in the school, excluding the 79, 6<sup>th</sup> form students, as they are funded directly by the LSC. The projected school budget deficit for 2010-11 could escalate to £1m without a robust review of the use of resources within the school, and the breadth of the curriculum on offer. If the budget deficit is not addressed as a matter of urgency, this very large deficit will have to be met from the Schools' Budget, thereby reducing the funding available to all schools in the 2011-12 financial year,

3.7.4 Walsall Children's Services have started to support Sneyd School to work towards a balanced budget for 2010-11. However, as pupil numbers continue to reduce, then this challenge becomes more difficult, because the funding

delivered via the delegated budget share will be insufficient to meet the fixed costs of the school and deliver a balanced curriculum for the remaining pupils.

The current aim of the support work is to balance the school's budget, or minimise the deficit, as at 31 March 2011. A financial proposal could then be put to the Schools Forum, in respect of the period 1 April 2011 to 31 August 2012, to agree funding to support the remaining Sneyd pupils, during the latter stages of the closure period, if this is the decision of Cabinet. Some savings have already been identified in the 2009-10 budget, which will carry over into the 2010-11 financial year, to help to reduce the possible deficit, but the budget review work is far from finished at this point in time. A range of options need to be considered, by the school, some of which may involve engaging the support of other schools.

3.7.5 Additional costs will also be incurred by the Council in respect of potential redundancy costs, which are unquantifiable at this point in time. A group of school improvement advisers is already working with the school to identify any areas of overstaffing in curriculum areas and to explore creative ways of maintaining an appropriate curriculum, during a period when funding is reducing. Inevitably there will be some redundancy costs for the Council to meet as the school becomes less financially and (subsequently) educationally viable. A worse case scenario, based upon closure of the school in 2012, would be costs of approximately £630k, if no staff were to leave. However, it is very likely that the £630k will be reduced due to staff turnover during the next three years. There may also be support available from other schools in respect of curriculum delivery, and there may be the potential for some staff to transfer to the receiving schools of Sneyd pupils, Until there is a clearer view on how the staffing situation will be managed , no definitive costs can be calculated,

3.7.6 Education support for pupils at Sneyd during any transition phase will be sought through the Black Country Challenge and the DCSF has indicated its intention to offer this support.

### 3.8 Overview

3.8.1 Local Authorities (LA) have a statutory responsibility under the Education Act, 1996, "to ensure that the schools in its area are sufficient in numbers, character and equipment to provide education suitable for different ages and abilities".

3.8.2 To meet this responsibility to manage school places in Walsall, the Council needs to ensure that it provides enough school places for Walsall pupils and qualifying out of the borough pupils.

3.8.3 The Council is also responsible for maximising the percentage of parental preferences for school places that are met. The Council cannot allow popular, over-subscribed schools to be reduced in size. In order to maximise the response to parental preferences for places at over-subscribed schools, it is necessary to remove surplus places at less popular schools.

3.8.4 The Information as to Provision of Education (England) Regulations, 2008, require local authorities to report to the Secretary of State those schools with a



surplus of 25% or more places. The number of schools with 25% or more surplus places and the overall percentage of surplus school places in a local authority informs the inspection regime for the Council.

- 3.8.5 The management of school places makes an important contribution to monitoring and raising standards of achievement of pupils in Walsall schools by ensuring that all Walsall schools are both educationally and financially viable.
- 3.8.6 Schools with declining rolls receive reduced budgets which inevitably result in reductions to staffing levels that make delivery of a high quality, broad and responsive curriculum very challenging.

#### **4. Resource considerations**

##### **4.1 Financial:**

###### Revenue

- 4.1.1 There would be additional transport costs as the majority of pupils would have to transfer to a more distant school; the cost of transport would need to be met for pupils who live outside the statutory walking distance of 3 miles to their nearest appropriate school. Children from low income families may qualify for transport to schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home. Children from low income groups are legally defined as those who are entitled to free school meals or those whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Eligibility for transport assistance is assessed on an annual basis.
- 4.1.2 The staff employed at Sneyd are employees of Walsall Council. If the decision is made to close the school, support will be provided to staff to find alternative employment in a Walsall school. Receiving schools are often keen to secure the services of staff from closing schools as they bring with them knowledge of the pupils and their families in addition to their professional expertise; they can also provide a sense of security for transferring pupils. As additional staff would be required at other schools, it is likely that many staff would secure alternative employment. In the event that these efforts are unsuccessful and staff remained without alternative employment when the school closed, they would be entitled to redundancy payment and in some cases access to their pensions. Every effort would be taken to minimise redundancies.

###### Capital

- 4.1.3 There are no direct capital costs as pupils would take up available places at other schools in Walsall and no additional accommodation would be required.

###### *Costs relating to closure of the Sneyd school building*

- 4.1.4 There would be capital costs associated with the closure of the Sneyd School building in August 2012. Costs which would need to be covered for the period the building is vacant include boarding up, security and rates.

### *Capital resources*

4.1.5 The estimated capital costs would relate solely to the closure of the Sneyd building and provision would need to be made for these costs when the Council has received notification of its capital allocations for 2012/13.

## 4.2 **Legal:**

4.2.1 The closure of Sneyd Community School is subject to statutory procedures. Following approval by Cabinet on 21 October 2009, a statutory notice was published. No representations were received during the six weeks representation period which followed publication of the notice.

4.2.2 Cabinet must now 'determine' or decide the proposal by considering whether it wishes to proceed. A copy of the complete proposal is attached as **Appendix 1**.

4.2.3 **Appendix 2** provides details of the statutory guidance to be considered by decision-makers when considering the closure of a school. This guidance states that:

- *"The Government wishes to encourage changes to local school provision which will boost standards and opportunities for young people, while matching school place supply as closely as possible to pupils' and parents' needs and wishes."*(para 4.19)
- *"Decision Makers should be satisfied that proposals for a school closure will contribute to raising local standards of provision, and will lead to improved attainment for children and young people. They should pay particular attention to the effects on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic groups, children from deprived backgrounds and children in care, with the aim of narrowing attainment gaps."*(para 4.20)
- *"The Decision Maker should normally approve proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places where the school proposed for closure has a quarter or more places unfilled, and at least 30 surplus places, and where standards are low compared to standards across the LA."* (para 4.35)

4.2.4 The following bodies may appeal against a Local Authority decision:

- the local Church of England diocese;
- the Bishop of the local Roman Catholic diocese;
- the Learning and Skills Council where the school provides education for pupils aged 14 and over; and
- in the case of **foundation** and **voluntary** schools only - the governing body or trustees of the school that is proposed for closure.

4.2.5 Appeals must be submitted to the Local Authority within 4 weeks of the Local Authority's decision. On receipt of an appeal the Local Authority must then

send the proposals, and the comments and objections received, to the Schools Adjudicator within 1 week of the receipt of the appeal. The Local Authority should also send a copy of the minutes of the Local Authority's meeting or other record of the decision and any relevant papers.

#### **4.3 Staffing:**

4.3.1 The staff employed at Sneyd Community School are employees of Walsall Council. If the decision is made to close the school, support will be provided to staff to find alternative employment in a Walsall School. Receiving schools are often keen to secure the services of staff from closing schools as they bring with them knowledge of the pupils and their families in addition to their professional expertise; they can also provide a sense of security for transferring pupils. As additional staff would be required at a number of other schools, it is likely that many staff would secure alternative employment. In the event that these efforts are unsuccessful and staff remained without alternative employment when the school closed, they would be entitled to redundancy payment and in some cases access to their pensions. Every effort would be taken to minimise redundancies.

### **5. Citizen impact**

5.1 The proposal to close Sneyd will provide opportunities for current and future pupils of the area to access places at schools which are viable educationally and financially.

### **6. Community safety**

6.1 There are no direct implications for community safety.

### **7. Environmental impact**

7.1 There are no environmental issues arising from this report.

### **8. Performance and risk management issues**

#### **8.1 Risk:**

8.1.1 The proposal to close the current education provision at Sneyd Community School will mitigate the risks of Sneyd becoming financially unviable over a long period of time.

#### **8.2 Performance management:**

8.2.1 The proposal to close the current education provision at Sneyd Community will remove the danger of the school's academic results declining further.

## **9. Equality implications**

- 9.1 Existing and potential future pupils at the school will be supported to find alternative school places as needed.
- 9.2 Pupils moving to higher performing schools will receive enhanced opportunities to maximise their educational potential.

## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1 A consultation on three options for the future of Sneyd Community School commenced on 8 May 2009 and ended on 19 June 2009. The outcome of this consultation was considered by Cabinet on 15 July 2009 when Members approved a short consultation on a single option for the future of Sneyd. The short consultation commenced on 14 September 2009 and ended on 2 October 2009. The outcome of the short consultation was considered by Cabinet on 21 October 2009 when Members approved the publication of a statutory proposal to close Sneyd Community School from 31 August 2012. The statutory notice was published on 6 November 2009 and the six weeks representation period ended on 18 December 2009.

## **11 Overview and recommendations**

- 11.1 Throughout this process officers have worked to secure the best possible way forward for pupils at Sneyd and at all schools in Walsall in the short, medium and longer terms.
- 11.2 In view of all of the above information in this report and accompanying appendices, officers recommend that Cabinet approves the statutory proposal to discontinue (close) Sneyd Community School from 31 August 2012.

### **Background papers**

Cabinet report, 22 October 2008: Review of Secondary Schools: The Future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College.

Scrutiny report, 20 November 2008: Cabinet report dated 22 October 2008: Review of Secondary Schools: The Future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College

Scrutiny report, 18 December 2008: Options for the Future: Sneyd Community – a Specialist Maths and Computing College

Sneyd Working Group, 5 March 2009: Report to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel

Scrutiny Report to Cabinet, 18 March 2009: Review of Secondary Schools: the Future of Sneyd Community School – A Specialist maths and Computing College

Cabinet report, 22 April 2009: The Future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College – Options for Consultation.

Cabinet report, 22 April 2009: The Future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College – Options for Consultation – supplementary report.

Cabinet report 15 July 2009: Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College: outcome of consultation on future.

Consultation response forms

Letters from consultees

Ofsted report, November 2008

Letter from HMI following monitoring visit, June 2009

Office of the Schools Commissioner, Note of Visit, dated 5 June 2009

Cabinet report 21 October 2009: Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College: outcome of consultation on future.

## Author

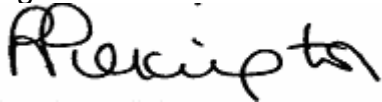
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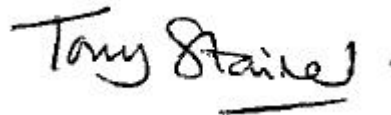
Signed:



Executive Director:  
Pauline Pilkington

Date: 04 01 2010

Signed:



Managing Director, Walsall Children's  
Services - Serco

Date: 04.01.2010

Signed:



Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Walker

Date: 04 01 2010



**Walsall Children's Services**

SECTION 15 PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE SNEYD COMMUNITY SCHOOL FROM  
31 AUGUST 2012

COMPLETE PROPOSAL

November 2009

## MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

### **Extract of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):**

#### **Contact details**

1. The name of the LA or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Local Authority: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Contact address: Walsall Children's Services – Serco, Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall WS4 1NG
School: Sneyd Community School, Vernon Way, Bloxwich, Walsall, WS3 2PA. DCSF number 335 4107

#### **Implementation**

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or, where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

It is proposed to close Sneyd Community School from 31 August 2012.
Current education provision at Sneyd Community School will cease on 31 August 2012. No pupils will be admitted to Year 7 or the sixth form in September 2010 and subsequent years. Pupils who started Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 will complete their key stage at Sneyd. At the end of their current key stage pupils will transfer on a year on year basis to places at other schools in the borough.
All pupils currently on roll in Key Stage 3 (Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9) will be offered a place in Year 10 at another school with available places. Pupils currently in Year 9 will transfer to another school in September 2010, those currently in Year 8 will transfer in September 2011 and those currently in Year 7 will transfer in September 2012.

## Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to this proposal have been complied with.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including:

- a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

Following initial consultation on three options from 8 May 2009 to 19 June 2009, there was a further consultation on the single option which forms this proposal from 14 September 2009 to 2 October 2009, the outcome of which was considered by Cabinet on 21 October 2009.

- (a) a list of consultees for the initial and further consultations is provided as Appendix A
- (b) minutes of public consultation meetings held during the initial consultation are provided as Appendix B
  - (i) Student Council
  - (ii) Staff
  - (iii) Governors
  - (iv) Parents
- (c) the views of the persons consulted are provided in Appendix C (initial consultation) and Appendix D (further consultation)
- (d) a copy of the initial consultation document dated 8 May 2009 is provided as Appendix E and a copy of the further consultation document is provided as Appendix F.

The consultation documents together with a letter of explanation were sent to the Consultees as detailed in Appendix A. Copies were also made available at Sneyd Community School, the local community centre, local libraries and on-line. A large print version was also available on request. The letters and consultation documents detailed the dates, times and locations of meetings for the student council, staff, governors, parents and members of the community. Consultation documents were also available at the consultation meetings. Detailed notes were made at all of the meetings. All consultation responses have been retained.



## Objectives

### 5. The objectives of the proposal.

The objective of the proposal is to close Sneyd Community School because of a sustained and significant fall in the number of pupils on roll at the school and also because of the challenges the school continues to face in its efforts to raise standards. These factors have resulted in the school becoming educationally and financially unviable.

Pupils on roll at Sneyd Community School would complete their current key stage and then, as appropriate, continue their education at an alternative school. This would enable pupils to access education in a more sustainable setting with higher standards of achievement.

## Standards and Diversity

### 6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

#### Standards

Sneyd Community School is a National Challenge School. Rapid improvement is required by the government at National Challenge Schools to ensure that 30% of more pupils achieve five good grades at GCSE (or equivalent) including English and mathematics by 2011. Confidence in the school sustaining improvement and attaining the national expectation by 2011 is low at present (as indicated by both the Black Country Challenge and School Improvement Advisers). Failure to perform above this level in 2011 would result in a direction from the Secretary of State.

For a long period, Sneyd Community School has failed to provide a high quality learning environment in which standards and quality of learning are sustained at a level that is satisfactory or better. Although Sneyd has been working to improve educational standards at the school for a number of years with additional support from the local authority and the Black Country Challenge, standards remain inadequate.

Sneyd Community School was first placed in an Ofsted category in 2005 when special measures were required. The 2005 report noted low standards and poor quality of teaching. In November 2006, after a period of substantial support, the school was removed from special measures and deemed satisfactory. However, improvements made by the school during this intervention were not sustained and a further inspection by Ofsted in November 2008 determined that the school required significant improvement and Sneyd was given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvements to teaching, education standards and also to sixth form provision are required. To date, improvement at Sneyd has only been identified as satisfactory both by Ofsted (May 2009) and by the Local Authority.

Standards at Sneyd Community School are significantly lower than at similar schools. As full comparative data for 2009 will not be available for some time yet, the following data also relates to 2008. The 2008 Key Stage 4 results were disappointing and show a downward trend over the last two years. At 19% 5+A\*-C (including English and mathematics), the school is in the **bottom 9% of all secondary schools in the country**. The three year improvement trend (Table 4 below) shows that there has been no evidence of sustained improvement on this indicator. Whilst Walsall has improved at over twice the national rate of improvement, Sneyd Community School has actually declined over that same period.

GCSE Results  
(% achieving 5+ A\* - C (or equivalent) including English and mathematics)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	Improvement	
					2006-2008	2006-2009
Sneyd	20%	17%	19%	26.5%	- 1%	6.5%
Walsall	34.8%	35.5%	40.6%	43.1%	+ 5.8%	8.3%
National	45.3%	46.3%	47.6%	NA	+ 2.3%	NA

NA: not yet available \*Unvalidated

Sneyd's Contextual Value Added score (the score that compares pupil progress in the school to all students nationally) from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 of 961.3 places them as one of the **lowest 1% of schools in the country**. National data shows that for all pupils (with the exception of lower ability girls in science) the school's outcomes for the past three years have been **significantly below what was expected**. In many cases the 2008 results were significantly below those of the previous year. Sneyd has the second lowest average point score for A levels in the borough.

Unvalidated Key Stage 3 results in English, mathematics and science in 2009 were higher than in previous years; only English results met or exceeded the targets set by the school.

Unvalidated results for 2009 show improvement on the key GCSE measures although the school still remains below the 30% national benchmark for pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics. Confidence in the school sustaining improvement and attaining the national expectation of 30% by 2011 is low at present as the improvement evident in the 2009 results reflected high levels of support from the local authority and Black Country Challenge in addition to the school's own efforts. At KS4 the achievement of 5+A\*-C including English and mathematics was 28%, close to the target of 30%. The achievement for 5+A\*-G and for 5+A\*-G including English and mathematics decreased. The levels achieved are still below the unvalidated average for LA schools, but the gap has closed compared to previous years. Failure to perform above this level in 2011 would result in a direction from the Secretary of State. The school does not demonstrate a history of being able to sustain and build upon improvement following a period of significant intervention and this remains of concern to the Local Authority.

The Post 16 results have improved however, the partnership arrangements for the delivery of post 16 courses with Pool Hayes will continue in the 2009/10 academic year for Year 13 pupils only.

The discontinuance of Sneyd Community School would enable pupils to access a school place at other, higher achieving, schools in the area.

### Diversity

There are 19 secondary schools in Walsall comprising 6 community schools, 1 VA Church of England school, 2 VA Catholic schools, 2 VA non-denominational selective single-sex grammar schools (one for boys and one for girls), 5 Foundation schools and 3 academies. The proposed closure of Sneyd Community School would broadly maintain diversity as the number of community schools would be reduced by one.

### Quality of education in the area

The quality of education in the area is improving slowly but remains low compared to LA and national levels. There is low take-up of further education and training and employment levels locally are low. It is envisaged that there will be an increased pace of improvement because a greater proportion of pupils will be able to obtain a place at a higher achieving school. As part of the transitional arrangements it is proposed to further increase the level of support available to pupils and this will enhance learning and raise aspirations and self-esteem for this community of learners. Partnership working between Sneyd Community School and other schools and 14-19 providers in the area will provide additional support for all learners during the transition and enable pupils to integrate well into alternative schools.

## Provision for 16-19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Sneyd Community School provides sixth form education, and, until recently this was operated through a collaborative arrangement with Pool Hayes Arts and Community School. In the current academic year this arrangement will only operate for Year 13 pupils. Although results in 2009 were an improvement on previous years, the school has not previously demonstrated that improvements can be sustained and it is envisaged that 16-19 year old students would benefit from being able to access places at higher achieving schools.

- a) It is expected that educational or training achievements would improve as a result of the curriculum offer available at other schools, colleges and other providers.
- b) Participation in education or training: the broader curriculum offer available at other provision is expected to result in an increase in staying-on rates. The minimum age at which young people can leave learning is being raised to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015 and this is expected to result in increased staying-on rates in schools in addition to increased participation in other settings.
- c) The range of educational or training opportunities is expected to be greater at other schools, colleges and other provision in the area. These settings offer a broad curriculum which includes a wider range of both academic and vocational courses at a variety of levels, thereby enabling the needs of students to be better met. Opportunities in settings in Walsall will be enhanced through partnership with other 14-19 providers in the local area. All other Walsall secondary schools have sixth form provision and a wide range of opportunities is available at Walsall College. Sneyd is located close to the border with Wolverhampton and Staffordshire enabling pupils to access a wide range of specialist provision in schools and colleges in these LAs in addition to the provision in Walsall.

## Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

The total number of pupils on roll in Walsall secondary schools peaked in January 2003 at 21,836 and has since fallen to 18,748 in 2009; numbers are projected to fall gradually until 2014. The total number of surplus places in the secondary sector in Walsall in January 2009 is 2,015 which equates to 9.9%. Of these surplus places, 463 were at Sneyd Community School which had over 34% surplus places. In October 2009, the number of surplus places at Sneyd had increased to 699 which is equivalent to 51.6%.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Sneyd Community School does not have a religious character and there would be no impact on the balance of denominational provision in the area or on parental choice regarding this.

## Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

Details of pupil numbers are provided in the table below. There are no boarding pupils.

Pupil numbers (October 2009)										
Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total Y7 - 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Total Post-16	Grand Total
70	99	93	144	186	592	40	21	3	64	656
Gender										
Males		49.7% (326)			Females			50.3% (330)		
Special Educational Needs										
No SEN		School Action		School Action Plus		Statement of SEN				
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
468	71.3	142	21.7	37	5.6	9	1.4			

## Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

- a) Pupils who started Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd Community School in September 2009 will complete their key stage at Sneyd. At the end of their current key stage pupils will transfer on a year on year basis to places at other schools in the borough.

All pupils currently on roll in Key Stage 3 (Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9) will be offered a place in Year 10 at another school with available places. Pupils currently in Year 9 will transfer to another school in September 2010, those currently in Year 8 will transfer in September 2011 and those currently in Year 7 will transfer in September 2012.

All Key Stage 4 pupils on roll at Sneyd Community School will leave at the end of their key stage. Support will be available for pupils who wish to join a sixth form at another school in Walsall. Pupils currently in Year 11 will transfer in September 2010; pupils currently in Year 10 will transfer in September 2011. Support will also be available for pupils who wish to apply for places at other Post 16 provision.

- b) Not applicable
- c) Not applicable

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or FE college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

The proposed closure of Sneyd Community School will remove a large number of surplus places in the local area. Pupils displaced from Sneyd Community School will be offered a place at an alternative school and it is not proposed to take any measures to increase the number of school or further education college places as a consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

### **Impact on the Community**

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

The community will continue to have access to local secondary school places. These places will be at schools which are viable educationally and financially. The standards of achievement at other local schools are higher than at Sneyd Community School.

Transitional arrangements are being developed to support the pupils who will transfer from Sneyd at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 over the next three years. Given the availability of places, it is expected that pupils will be able to move to other schools in friendship groups. Receiving schools would hold a programme of transition activities in conjunction with Sneyd during the summer term. Transition activities are expected to include a variety of visits, joint activities including sports and performances and taster activities. Additional curriculum support activities will be planned to ensure that transferring pupils are prepared for the options and syllabuses they will be following in their new schools.

A range of activities is operated at the Sneyd site by the Community Association. Community use of the facilities would be retained until August 2012. In the medium and longer term, these facilities could continue to be made available for community use through another secondary school, the proposed 14-19 Engineering Academy / University Technical College, or through other arrangements.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

Sneyd Community School runs a breakfast club for pupils. This would not continue after the closure of the school, however, as almost all schools run breakfast clubs, it is expected that pupils transferring to other schools would be able to access such provision. In addition, Sneyd runs a range of out-of-school activities for pupils during term time; activities include gymnastics, dance/fitness sessions, kayaking, 'Dizzy Kidz Activity Centre' and go-carting. In school holiday periods, young people are able to access a range of activities and trips. As all secondary schools offer extended services, pupils would be able to access similar provision at the schools to which they transfer.

Sneyd has secured funding to deliver study support training for parents and although this offer has not yet been taken up by parents. Many schools offer such support and it is likely therefore that parents would be able to access this through other settings and schools.

Sneyd holds a weekly Health Drop-In that is staffed in partnership with the NHS YPHA team. This could continue until August 2012 and discussions will be held with the NHS at the appropriate time to consider how this service could be continued thereafter.

## Travel

### 15. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.

Although there are limited places available at the closest alternative schools, it is expected that some pupils will transfer to these and that in some cases journeys to school will be shorter than at present. The nearest alternative secondary school is less than 1 mile from the Sneyd site, four alternative secondary schools in Walsall are within 2 miles of the Sneyd site and a total of 5 secondary schools in Walsall are within 3 miles, the statutory walking distance. In addition, there are two schools in adjacent local authority areas which are located approximately 1 mile and approximately 3 miles from the Sneyd site.

Some pupils will transfer to other schools which are further away and the cost of transport would be met for pupils who live outside the statutory walking distance of 3 miles to their nearest appropriate school. Children from low income families may qualify for transport to schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home. Children from low income families are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals or those whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

The area is served by excellent public transport and information about bus routes and times etc will be made available when alternative schools are being considered with parents.

One of the secondary schools to which it is expected some pupils will transfer already operates a direct bus service to enable pupils resident in the Sneyd area to easily access a place at the school.

### 16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

Pupils who live close to Sneyd Community School and who apply for a Year 7 place in future admission rounds would be able to access a place at a local school. In the event that any parents request a place at more distant schools, transport advice will be made available in order to minimise increased car use.

During the transition period, pupils from Sneyd Community School would transfer to alternative schools. Some pupils would get a place at a local school which in some cases is expected to result in a shorter journey to school whilst others would travel to more distant schools. The area is served by excellent public transport and information about transport will be made available when alternative schools are being considered with parents. Requests for assistance would be considered in line with the Council's transport policy and bus passes issued where appropriate. Cabinet has asked officers to explore the opportunity to provide support with transport during the transition period and this will be reported back to a future Cabinet meeting.

## Related Proposals

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the LA or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

The proposed closure of Sneyd Community School is not related to any other proposals which have been, are, or are about to be published.

## Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) considered:

- a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
- c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4)

Not applicable.

## Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- b) the LA's assessment of the quality and quantity of alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable.

## Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the LA or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

Not applicable.

**Consultation Document – 8 May 2009**

Consultation on:	A Proposal to Discontinue Sneyd Community School from 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2012
Deadline:	All responses must be received by <b>19<sup>th</sup> June 2009</b>
Consultees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents of all pupils at Sneyd Community School, Pool Hayes Arts and Community College, Frank F Harrison Engineering College and Willenhall School Sports College.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents of children offered a year 7 place at Sneyd Community School in September 2009</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headteacher, Governors and Staff of Sneyd Community School, Pool Hayes Arts and Community College, Frank F Harrison Engineering College and Willenhall School Sports College.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Council at Sneyd Community School, Pool Hayes Arts and Community College, Frank F Harrison Engineering College and Willenhall School Sports College.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Headteachers of all Walsall Schools</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councillor Z Ali, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward Councillors</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Walsall Councillors</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair of Blakenall and Bloxwich Local Neighbourhood Partnership</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair of St Matthews, Birchills and Leamore Local Neighbourhood Partnership</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional Associations and Trade Unions: ATL, NAHT, NASWUT, NUT, PAT, SHA, TGWU, UNISON and GMB/APEX</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Education Welfare Officers for Sneyd Community School</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Walsall Children's Services - Serco CSG</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finance Resource Consultants for Sneyd Community School</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School Improvement Advisors for Sneyd Community School</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Denis O'Rourke, Head of Education Asset Management</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Officer responsible for school organisation in neighbouring LAs (please bring this letter to the attention of any school that may be affected)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diocesan Schools Commission – Fr Marcus Stock</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Church of England Diocese of Lichfield – Colin Hopkins</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paul Goddard-Patel, Governor Support</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Winnick MP, Walsall North Constituency</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pauline Pilkington –Director of Children's Services , Walsall Council</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Sheehan – Chief Executive, Walsall Council</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jane Evans – Director of Commissioning Walsall tPCT</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Seaton – Black Country LSC (Walsall)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Bell – Black Country LSC</li> </ul>
Public Access:	<p>Bloxwich Library          Elmore Row Community Centre          Walsall Children's Services Website  <a href="http://www.walsallcs.com">www.walsallcs.com</a> (access through the School Organisation link)</p>
Responses to:	<p>Susan Lupton          Head of Planning and Development Services          Walsall Children's Services - Serco          Education Development Centre          Pelsall Lane          Rushall          Walsall          WS4 1NG</p>

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## Consultation Document – 14 September 2009

Consultation on:	A Proposal to Discontinue Sneyd Community School from 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2012
Deadline:	All responses must be received by <b>2 October 2009</b>
Consultees:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents of all pupils at Sneyd Community School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents of children offered a year 7 place at Sneyd Community School in September 2009 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headteacher, Governors and Staff of Sneyd Community School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Council at Sneyd Community School <input type="checkbox"/> Headteachers of all Walsall Schools <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councillor R Walker, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward Councillors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Walsall Councillors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair of Blakenall and Bloxwich Local Neighbourhood Partnership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair of St Matthews, Birchills and Leamore Local Neighbourhood Partnership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional Associations and Trade Unions: ATL, NAHT, NASWUT, NUT, PAT, SHA, TGWU, UNISON and GMB/APEX <input type="checkbox"/> Education Welfare Officers for Sneyd Community School <input type="checkbox"/> Walsall Children's Services - Serco CSG <input type="checkbox"/> Finance Resource Consultants for Sneyd Community School <input type="checkbox"/> School Improvement Advisors for Sneyd Community School <input type="checkbox"/> Denis O'Rourke, Head of Education Asset Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Officer responsible for school organisation in neighbouring LAs (please bring this letter to the attention of any school that may be affected) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diocesan Schools Commission – Fr Marcus Stock <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Church of England Diocese of Lichfield – Colin Hopkins <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Goddard-Patel, Governor Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Winnick MP, Walsall North Constituency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pauline Pilkington – Director of Children's Services , Walsall Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Sheehan – Chief Executive, Walsall Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jane Evans – Director of Commissioning Walsall tPCT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Seaton – Black Country LSC (Walsall) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Bell – Black Country LSC
Public Access:	Bloxwich Library Elmore Row Community Centre Walsall Children's Services Website <a href="http://www.walsallcs.com">www.walsallcs.com</a> (access through the School Organisation link)
Responses to:	Susan Lupton Head of Planning and Development Services Walsall Children's Services - Serco Education Development Centre Pelsall Lane Rushall Walsall WS4 1NG

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## Consultation Notes – Schedule of Meeting Dates

### Meetings held for Sneyd Community School

Consultees	Venue	Date	Time
School Council	At School	18-May-09	2:25pm
Staff	At School	18-May-09	3:50pm
Governors	At School	18-May-09	6:00pm
Parent Drop In Session	At School	19-May-09	2:30pm
Parent Drop In Session	At School	19-May-09	5:00pm
Parent Drop In Session	Mossley Primary School	20-May-09	5:00pm
Parent Drop In Session	Elmore Row Community Centre	21-May-09	5:00pm

### Meetings held for Frank F Harrison Engineering College

Consultees	Venue	Date	Time
School Council	At School	03-Jun-09	2:00pm
Staff	At School	03-Jun-09	3:15pm
Governors	At School	03-Jun-09	5:15pm
Parent Drop In Session	At School	03-Jun-09	6:30pm

### Meetings held for Pool Hayes Arts & Community College

Consultees	Venue	Date	Time
School Council	At School	04-Jun-09	2:00pm
Staff	At School	04-Jun-09	3:15pm
Governors	At School	04-Jun-09	5:30pm
Parent Drop In Session	At School	04-Jun-09	6:30pm

### Meetings held for Willenhall School Sports College

Consultees	Venue	Date	Time
School Council	At School	09-Jun-09	2:00pm
Staff	At School	09-Jun-09	3:00pm
Governors	At School	09-Jun-09	4:00pm
Parent Drop In Session	At School	09-Jun-09	5:30pm



**Walsall Children’s Services**

# Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College
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<b>Meeting with:</b>	Student Council
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<b>Date:</b>	18 May 2008
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<b>Time:</b>	2.25pm
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**PRESENT:**

<b>Walsall Children’s Services - Serco</b>	<b>Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College</b>	<b>Others</b>
Tony Stainer	Head Teacher	
Avril Walton	12 Students	
Susan Lupton		
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

Tony Stainer opened the meeting and outlined the process of consultation. Pupils confirmed that they had received a copy of the consultation document. Questions were posed by the school council unless stated otherwise.

**Questions, Comments and Responses**

- **In relation to figures (used in presentation) showing the percentage of pupils achieving 5 A\* - C GCSE grades (including English and Maths), is this for all pupils in Walsall?**

A            Yes, the figures shown include all pupils in Walsall

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- **In relation to the average number of pupils in Walsall achieving A\* - C GCSE grades, does the average figure include Sneyd pupils?**

A            Yes

- 
- **If pupils are to move at the end of their Key Stage, will this not be confusing for pupils who are choosing their options?**

A                    Walsall Children’s Services – Serco would work closely with schools concerned (including Sneyd) to ensure that a range of options could be covered. This could not commence until a decision has been made. Options would be chosen once it was known which school pupils were transferring to.

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- **If you stop admitting to Year 7, what happens to the other year groups?**

A                    They would leave at the end of their current Key Stage (as at September 2009).

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- **Would it not be more expensive to create more places in other schools?**

A                    No, it would be less expensive than running a school with large areas of surplus space.

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- **If the Council is receiving money to be invested into secondary schools, why can this money not be invested at Sneyd to improve the school?**

TS                    A plan is in place for Building Schools for the Future, and consideration has been given to where funding will be invested.

---

- **But Surely if money was put into Sneyd, then this would help make the school more popular?**

A                    There are 1700 surplus secondary places in Walsall, and Sneyd is not a popular school.

Obs                    But the school is improving.

A                    Sneyd is not delivering now though.

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- **I believe the closure is making the school unpopular.**

A                    I agree. That is why it is important for the Council to make a decision as soon as they can so all parties know where they stand.

- **If I know the school is closing, then why should I be bothered about motivating myself?**

A            Because you are here now, and you need to carry on applying yourself to your learning.

---

- **Talk of closing Sneyd first started in October, and a decision is not being made until July. This does not seem like a quick decision.**

A            Cabinet made a decision in March to consult on the three options outlined in the consultation document. A report will go to Cabinet in July and they will decide if they want to proceed with one of the options. If so a statutory proposal would be published in September 2009 and a 6 weeks representation period would then commence for people to put their views across. The Council asked their Scrutiny Panel to look at the future of Sneyd to ensure that the Council makes the right decision.

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- **Would a 14-19 academy mean that this school would end up getting pupils who are not doing well at other schools, and that do not want to be at school?**

A            No. A vision for the facility would be put in place, and it would offer engineering qualifications. There would be an admissions round as pupils would apply for places.

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- **How would people know that they want to study Engineering subjects at the age of 14?**

A            There could be opportunities to study other subjects elsewhere if pupils at the proposal 14-19 academy wanted to study other subjects not offered by the academy.

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- **How much money would the council get for this engineering college?**

A            This is not yet known. Councillor Zahid thought that it may be in the region of £10m, but this is not confirmed yet.

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- **There are serious issues/problems between the children at Frank F Harrison and Sneyd.**

A            Thank you for raising this issue. This will be recorded in the meeting notes

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- **Frank F Harrison is already an engineering college, why would you want another engineering college in the local area?**

A            Frank F Harrison would be affected if a 14-19 engineering college go ahead, but Walsall Children's Services – Serco would work with the school to address these issues.

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- **I think that Sneyd is a successful school, and myself and 4 other pupils have taken GCSE Maths early and all achieved a grade B.**
- 

- **Pupils will have to travel further to other schools.**

A            Some pupils actually live nearer to other schools than Sneyd, but not all. Some pupils will have to travel further.

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- **Some pupils do want to come to Sneyd. If pupils do choose to come to Sneyd ahead of other schools, does this not mean it is a popular school?**

A            This is not necessarily how it works.

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- **Does the Council just to obtain the school land for some other use?**

A            No. The Council has said that it wants education to continue on the Sneyd site.

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Tony Stainer closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The head also thanked the students for attending.



Walsall Children's Services

# Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College
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<b>Meeting with:</b>	Staff
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<b>Date:</b>	18 May 2009
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<b>Time:</b>	3.50pm
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**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children's Services - Serco	Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College	Others
Tony Stainer	Head Teacher	
Avril Walton	Approximately 70 Staff	
Sue Wedgwood		
Primula Paul		
Susan Lupton		
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

TS opened the meeting and outlined the process of consultation. Staff members confirmed that they had received a copy of the consultation document. Questions were posed by the staff unless stated otherwise.

**Questions, Comments and Responses**

- **Other schools in Walsall have smaller numbers than Sneyd, so why is Sneyd potentially being closed?**

A                    Sneyd has a higher percentage of surplus places. The measure is derived from capacity of the school buildings, and the number of pupils on roll at school.

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- **For the meeting held between the DCSF and the council, do you have minutes of the meeting?**

A There were two telephone conversations with the DCSF, and then one meeting.

Obs We want to see minutes of this meeting.

A The meeting related to issues across Walsall Schools, not just Sneyd, and no minutes were produced.

Obs Our MP David Winnick is making a freedom of information request.

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➤ **Why does the consultation document not show that Sneyd has got the most improved sixth form in Walsall, as detailed in the last Ofsted inspection?**

A We used the most recent confirmed Ofsted date that was available at the time the document was produced.

Obs You are cherry picking figures.

Obs This does not take into account the falling birth rate across the Walsall borough.

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➤ **On the consultation response paper, it asks for preferences on the 3 options. Surely feedback on the final page should be taken into account?**

A The document consults on 3 proposals, but you can make other observation on the back.

Obs What if there is an overwhelming response objecting to the 3 options – do you have to take that into account?

A Yes. All responses are analysed and reported back on.

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➤ **Can we see the consultation responses?**

A Yes. The Cabinet report is a published document and will be available on the Council's website. Actual response forms will also be taken to the cabinet meeting.



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➤ **Will we know how many responses are received?**

A Yes, this will be detailed in the document.

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➤ **Staff are worried about jobs – what help will be given to find new positions?**

A HR would hold individual meetings with everyone and try to match people skills with vacancies. We cannot make schools take staff, but can put people forward for positions.

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➤ **Why do we need another engineering academy? There is one opening in Wolverhampton, and another one sponsored by JCB in Stafford.**

A This is a different type of establishment. The 14-19 establishment would be called a University Technical College. It is a highly specialised facility that would be linked with the University of Wolverhampton and would provide more specialist resources. There would be an impact to Frank F Harrison

Obs The consultation is therefore not valid as the consultation document refers to a 14-19 Academy, not a University Technical College.

A The consultation is valid, but the name has changed. This is referred to and expanded on within the consultation document.

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➤ **What will happen with staff's pensions?**

A Walsall Children's Services – Serco has to demonstrate that they have worked to redeploy staff before considering redundancy. Support staff over the age of 50, and teachers over the age of 58 can access their pension straight away.

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➤ **Do staff have any TUPE rights to be transferred to the new school if Sneyd is merged with another school?**

A No. There would be no TUPE rights.

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➤ **Golden handcuffs – are there any incentives to encourage us to stay at the school?**

Obs They will not do a single thing to help us.

A We are already talking to colleagues at the Black Country Challenge, about helping the school to deliver the curriculum.

➤ **What percentage of staff on average would you find new jobs for?**

A In my experience of working with schools in Walsall, I would expect the percentage to be quite high, but I cannot give an actual percentage.

➤ **Walsall to qualify for BSF – a number of places have to be lost. Why do surplus places have to be lost from this area of Walsall?**

A At 25% of the level of surplus places at Sneyd is too high and as numbers continue to decrease this will increasingly impact on the wellbeing of the school. In terms of future planning we look at population trends and planned building developments.

➤ **Published figures show improvement in 6<sup>th</sup> form figures and were shown in a Walsall Children's Services document – so why did you quote the negative Ofsted report?**

A There has been scrutiny of all 3 options including this data. All data has been seen by the Scrutiny Group.

➤ **We need a school here on this site. Why close 1 school and enlarge 3 others?**

A 2 other schools are 1.5 miles away.

Obs Do you realise that there is massive conflict between pupils at Frank F Harrison and Sneyd. Go into the classrooms and talk to the children, because not one will go to Frank F Harrison.

Obs Students who live on the Beechdale estate choose to come to Sneyd rather than Frank F Harrison.

Obs 3,000 new homes due to be built in Willenhall. Cllr Ali suggested that these would generate around 450 children. Where will these children go?

Obs Presumably these additional children would go to Frank F Harrison.

A A lot of work is being done to model pupil yield from housing developments. Generally, every 100 3 bedroom houses generates 3 children per year group. 3000 dwellings is part of a range of options, which the Council is considering. The development period is currently 10-15 years

➤ **Why has Councillor Ian Shires said that 3000 houses will be delivered in the next 5 years. Recession won't last forever, where will these children go?**

A All of the options under consideration include the closure of Sneyd.

Obs Why has Cllr Ian Shires said that there will be 3000 homes delivered within 5 years. The recession will not last forever, where will these children go?

A All of the options under consideration involve the closure of Sneyd.

➤ **We all know the engineering Academy will not happen, because there are already engineering Academies in Wolverhampton and Staffordshire.**

Obs Parents want an 11-19 Academy here

A We would need to demonstrate that we have the students to fill an 11-19 Academy, and the number of students at Sneyd is insufficient. The numbers of pupils in the borough is also declining.

Obs An Academy would attract pupils from across the border.

Obs We are losing pupils every week because of the uncertainty – parents are moving their children

A One of the pupils in the school council meeting said “what is the point of me being bothered to learn if the school is closing?”

Obs Children will leave if the school is going to close.

- A The decision to go ahead was made by Walsall Council's Cabinet after the matter was referred to the scrutiny panel for consideration of all the options. We are only able to consult on the options approved by cabinet.
- Obs There is nothing democratic about this because Cabinet makes the decision.
- A The matter was referred to the Scrutiny panel so that it could be given full consideration.
- Obs Ormiston were interested in sponsoring an 11-19 academy.
- A There is no proven need for an academy.
- Obs Where would additional pupils from housing developments go? Frank F Harrison is also a failing school. Sneyd out performs Frank F Harrison yet you are choosing to close Sneyd – which is the most modern facility in the borough. Why can't the admission number be reduced at nearby schools?
- A We have a duty to maintain places at popular and successful schools. Frank F Harrison is a successful and popular school; it is virtually full at an admission number of 180. Applications for Sneyd have reduced steadily since 2005.
- Obs Walsall Academy takes all of the high performing pupils from Sneyd.
- A Walsall Academy's admissions are banded – they do not just take the most able pupils but from across the ability range.
- Obs Where will our children go?
- A They will all get places at other schools, depending upon which option is taken forward.
- Obs Report on closure was leaked to press just before secondary admissions closing date to dissuade parents from applying.
- Parent Why do I have to take my children out of a school they want to be at and make them go to a school they don't want to go to? Why have you written to parents advising them not to put Sneyd down as first choice?

A Please let me have a copy of the letter, and I will be happy to answer that question.

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➤ **Why are other schools filling up over the border? Walsall slogan – ‘My Walsall, My Future’ is certainly not about children in this school.**

Head of year 8 I dealt with 6 mid year admissions today for pupils wanting to leave Sneyd. This is all due to the uncertainty of the future of the school. Some pupils are going to schools across the border.

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➤ **How does an engineering Academy appeal to girls? Where will a big company sponsorship come from in the current economic climate?**

A These are all issues we are looking into. The Council has been very clear that it wants learning to continue on the Sneyd site.

Obs At a council meeting, Cllr Ali said there is no political will for closure.

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➤ **Where are the 900 pupils going to go to? Name schools who will willingly give up 20 children.**

A It would be down to parental preference. The LA has to demonstrate it has planned for the right number of places, that schools are viable and places are in the right place. There will be a viability issue with BSF if the number of surplus places is not reduced. This is not a referendum, Cabinet will consider consultation responses, BSF need and Black Country Challenge issues before coming to a decision on closure. In July Cabinet will either make a decision to take forward one of the options or could reopen consultation.

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➤ **Why does the consultation document refer to a 14-19 Academy and Skills Centre if these are not options?**

A Cabinet wanted consultation on these possible developments in 14-19 provision to take place alongside consultation on the future of Sneyd.

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➤ **What exactly is a Skills Centre?**

Obs Skills centre is another word for a PRU

A Strategy for change is looking at establishing a series of skills centres around a 14-19 delivery. Skills Centres are not PRUs.

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➤ **In what ways is a skills centre different to a PRU?**

A A group of schools would manage the centre. Analysis has been done of Black Country employers needs and this has demonstrated a need for 'clean engineering' skills. The curriculum on offer would be more specialised, deliver aspects of diplomas and would not necessarily be targeted at the lower tier.

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➤ **What other boroughs do Serco run?**

A Stoke-on-Trent and Bradford.

Obs I won't be applying for jobs there then.

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Staff were encouraged to use your opportunity to respond to the consultation through the response form included in consultation packs already provided. The form can be downloaded from the Walsall Children's Services website.

The Head thanked the staff for attending before TS closed the meeting.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Sneyd Community – A Maths and Computing College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Governors
<b>Date:</b>	18 May 2009
<b>Time:</b>	6 pm

**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children's Services - Serco	Sneyd Community – A Maths and Computing College	Others
Tony Stainer	10 Governors	
Avril Walton	Headteacher	
Sue Wedgwood		
Susan Lupton		
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

TS outlined the proposal for Walsall Children's Services - Serco and the consultation process. TS confirmed with the governors that they had all received a copy of the consultation document.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

- **I have 2 boys in Year 8 and another in Year 10 at Sneyd; therefore I have potentially 4 views that may count from our household, how do we complete the form?**

A More forms are available on the website, or alternatively more copies can be provided.

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- **I understand that there has been a vote of no confidence in the Strategy for Education in Walsall, and there is a meeting tonight,**

**how do you think this will go? Could the consultation process be brought to a halt if councillors agree with that proposal?**

A I have no idea with how it will go. Yes, the Council could stop this process now.

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➤ **We had a visit from the Ormiston trust, who told us what they could do for the school in terms of becoming an Academy. Governors all voted unanimously for this, and it would solve a lot of problems for us.**

A The decision to open an Academy is a Local Authority decision, and there has to be a need for an Academy. Walsall has too many surplus places for another Academy to be viable.

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➤ **If we had an Academy then it would fill up and be a success.**

A There is not a demonstrable need for an Academy at Sneyd. We have to produce a strategy for young people, and the DCSF need to see and understand this strategy as a whole on a borough wide level.

Obs There is no social justice in what you are doing. Sneyd needs an 11-19 school. Why can we not have minutes of the meetings with the DCSF?

A We are currently in discussions with the DCSF and have had several meetings, but they have not been solely focussed on Sneyd.

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➤ **Where are all these children going to go? There are serious problems between FFH and Sneyd, it would be a 'war zone', and we do not want that option. Students and staff do not want to go there.**

A Frank F Harrison is one option. Pupils would transfer to other schools in option A and to three local schools in option B



➤ **Even if Sneyd is closed, this will still not solve the entire surplus space problem.**

A            There is a national recommendation that around 7.5% surplus space, and this is what we have planned for in BSF.

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➤ **How is Capacity worked out?**

A            It is worked out on floor area.

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➤ **Can we not reduce places at other schools?**

A            We cannot reduce places at popular schools. Some parents are allocated a place for their child at this school – they do not actually express a preference for it.

Obs         The press release earlier this year dissuaded parents from applying for a place at Sneyd.

A            Discussions on closure of schools always have an impact on pupils numbers, but for 5 years a number of pupils admitted have been allocated a place at the school and did not express a preference for it.

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➤ **Is it not true that you did not want Sneyd to become an Academy because it would have an impact on pupil numbers at Frank F Harrison, Willenhall, and Pool Hayes?**

A            For many years parents have chosen not to apply for a place at Sneyd.

There has to be a proven need for places before an Academy can be opened.

Obs If you did a consultation on whether parents would apply for a place at a Sneyd 11-19 Academy, then there would be an overwhelming response in favour of this. The school would be full because it would be an academy. If I had to choose, I would send my child to an Academy.

Obs Numbers have fallen since the school fell into special measures. There will be a massive drift across the border if this school closes

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➤ **If this school does not close, are there other option for the 14-19 academy within the strategy for change?**

A We intend to establish a series of skills centres, and we will provide feedback received on this. A 14-19 Academy would be linked with WALCAT and Wolverhampton University and a number of places would be available to other out of borough pupils.

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➤ **Will a 14-19 Academy have an impact on pupil numbers anyway?**

A The impact will be reduced as not all of the places would be taken up by children from Walsall.

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➤ **So there are no guaranteed places for local children?**

A We are looking into the best way of admitting pupils. KS4 and KS5 education is changing, more children will move to other schools after KS3.

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➤ **Why open another facility if this is the reason why there are problems?**

A We are looking into the option at the moment to make sure this is viable.

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➤ **Is there any timescale for the 14-19 Academy consultation?**

A This is happening at the same time as this consultation. Discussions are on-going with college and university.

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➤ **Which heads have you consulted?**

A All heads in the borough have been consulted, and consultations with local neighbourhood partnerships are happening now.

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➤ **Which skills would be accommodated?**

A If we open 4 skills centres, we would have a management structure involving WALCAT. Once a strategy has been accepted we would work with Headteachers and governors to look at where they would be best established. Key needs etc would need to be established in a separate consultation on this later. The purpose is to evaluate 14-19 provision with areas of expertise across the borough.

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➤ **Diplomas take years to establish. Where are the students from the Mossley site going to go? The Mossley estate area will decline because families will not have the money to travel or buy uniforms to go elsewhere. This is not about the children, it is about what Walsall Council wants on the site.**

Obs If we had an academy, all of the school's problems would be solved. If this school became an academy, then pupil numbers at other schools in the borough would reduce.

- Obs We are struggling no knowing what happens next.
- A We are following the legislation on consultation. No final decision has been made. We cannot decide anything without consultation. An informed decision will be made by Cabinet in July.
- Obs The idea of closing Sneyd and moving kids to Frank F Harrison is unworkable, and you should be telling the council this in July.
- A The council will make a decision based in information from consultation in July and this will be reported back to them.
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➤ **6 years ago I heard that the school was going to close. What is the point of enlarging some schools to the detriment of one that is already there? You will be transporting children to schools and extending their day.**

- A The future of learning will be different and a lot of children will have to travel other provision. Learning may not just be in one school. It could be in businesses as well.
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➤ **You will lose children across the border if you close Sneyd, whereas if we had an 11-19 Academy we would attract pupils from across the border. If a parent chooses to send their child cross border that is parental choice and it seems you are taking that away from parents. Parents are not in favour of a 14-19 Academy, but they would support an 11-19 Academy.**

- Obs What if consultation responses are in favour of 11-19 Academy and reject all option proposed and say they would prefer an 11-19 school on the site?
- A This is not up to us, we gather consultation sheets and other responses and then write a summary. The results of consultation together with the responses are considered by elected members who make a decision taking account of the consultation responses.

- Obs            Could we come in and see the consultation responses?
- A                We would have to take advice on this because people who respond may not feel that their response should be a public document.
- Obs            I am worried that unfavourable responses will be ignored. We do not trust the council.
- A                We have to be careful that we are not making responses public that people believe they are making confidentially. We will take legal advice on this.
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➤            **The leaked document was part of a plan to close Sneyd. There are lots of social problems in the area. Consultation document gives no hope of retaining the school – all 3 options include closure. The governing body meet again tomorrow, what should we do?**

- A                Send a response to the consultation.
- Obs            Would a corporate response from the governors carry any more weighting?
- A                We report on numbers of responses and include an analysis of the responses and would say if an agreed view was reported by the governing body.
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➤            **On page 22 of the consultation document, says comments and objectives will not automatically go forward to statutory phase of the process.**

- A                We are currently consulting on a number of options. If the council decide to go ahead we will then publish a statutory proposal and will go into a 6 week representation period and only representations and comments received in that period will go forward to be considered when the final decision is taken.
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➤ **On page 20, question 4 asks for the ranking of the options, what happens if you do not agree with any of them?**

A                    People can say that they would prefer for the school to stay open, but if it has to close we would prefer this option. Cabinet want to know people's thoughts on the 3 options.

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➤ **What would parents put if they do not want any of the options?**

A                    They can say on the form that they do not want any of the options. It is not a vote, it is an opportunity for parents to respond in any way they wish and to indicate which option they would prefer if the school does close.

Obs                This school has had poor results, but there are now things in place to improve. Staff/leadership team are working hard for the Sneyd pupils. Sneyd must be given a chance to prove that it can improve. Results will improve.

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TS wished the school good luck in their Ofsted inspection the following day, thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College – held at school
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Parents Drop In Sessions
<b>Date:</b>	19 May 2009
<b>Time:</b>	2 – 4.30pm

### Questions, Comments and Responses

#### Parent of year 7 pupil

Obs Our child doesn't want to move school, he has come on a lot since starting here. As parents we want to ensure that his education is not disrupted any further as the news of the closure has obviously affected him. We don't want the school to close at all – it is not an option for us.

➤ **Where did the 3 options about the school closure come from?**

A After various discussions between the Council and Walsall Children's Services- Serco it was noted that low standards, GCSE results, school being in special measures and the declining numbers on roll meant that we needed to look at the future of the school to ensure the best possible education for the pupils who attend Sneyd.

➤ **What are the main proposals?**

A Details of the proposals were given.

➤ **Who will pay for the new uniform?**

A The transfer of pupils moving school would be during the

summer holidays so we expect this is a time when parents would normally buy items of new uniform for replacement or because their child had grown.

➤ **Is the school definitely going to close?**

A No decision has been made. Cabinet will be considering what you say in these consultation meetings and they will take into account what you have said before making a final decision on the future of the school.

➤ **Are there enough spaces in Pool Hayes, Frank F and Willenhall now to accommodate all the Sneyd pupils?**

A Not at the moment but if either options B or C was taken forward by Cabinet additional places would be created.

Obs Rivalry between Frank F and Sneyd is a major issue at the moment. It would be a shame to lose this building as it is a good building with better facilities and has a lot of community use.

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**Parent of 2 pupils – Year 7 and Year 9**

➤ **I have major concerns about the proposals for the future of Sneyd and would prefer there to be an 11 – 19 academy on the site.**

➤ **If the closure goes ahead, what does this mean for my sons?**

A The closure of the school would mean it would be a phased move into another school (Year on Year). Your youngest son would move school at the time of moving from KS3 to KS4 and your eldest son would move to another school at the end of KS4 if he wanted to continue into sixth form..

➤ **I am unsure about my youngest son moving school before doing his GCSEs – how will you make sure that his education doesn't suffer?**

A The beginning of KS4 is a logical time to move to allow pupils to do their GCSEs etc. at one school – obviously to move a pupil mid-year or mid key stage could be very disruptive and we want



there to be as little disruption as possible.

➤ **Will the new academy (if it goes ahead) provide all academic subjects as standard?**

A Yes it would offer the full national curriculum, and there would be courses in engineering subjects.

➤ **If the academy goes ahead, would my son have to apply for a place?**

A Yes there would be an admissions round for the academy. No one would automatically transfer.

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**Parent of Year 9 pupil**

➤ **Would the school be closed under Option C?**

A If Option C is chosen then Sneyd would close in August 2010 and pupils would transfer to Frank F Harrison.

➤ **Why isn't the proposed Engineering Academy 11 – 19? Where does the 14 come from?**

A An 11-19 Academy on the Sneyd Site is not viable because of pupil numbers. If Sneyd were to close and the local authority would like educational provision to continue on the site, a 14-19 Academy is one way this could be done.

Obs I would not want to take my child out of school to attend the 14-19 Academy in KS4.

A It would be up to parents to decide if they wanted to apply for the Engineering Academy at the end of KS3.

Obs Why open a 14-19 academy if numbers are not viable for an 11 – 19 academy?

A The 14-19 Academy would not just be for pupils from the Walsall Borough, pupils from other boroughs could also apply for admission.

Obs Darlaston seems to have lots of spaces?

A Darlaston is currently in special measures and has a number of vacant places.

Obs In relation to the questions on the consultation response form, what answer provided by parents/teachers etc will be taken into account.

A Although many people don't want the school to close, if it were to close then it is best to indicate which of the options you would prefer for the future.

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### **Parent of year 11 pupil hoping to complete 6<sup>th</sup> form and former pupil**

➤ **What are the Primary numbers for this area?**

A There has been a steady decline in the number of pupils on roll at Sneyd, but this is because parents are choosing not to apply for a place at the school rather than due to a general decline in primary numbers, other secondary schools in the area are full.

➤ **Sneyd has not been given a chance to better itself and a decision has already been made to close the school.**

A We are currently in the consultation process and no decision has been made at this stage. The report on the consultation will include the responses made by parents and will be submitted to cabinet. Please complete the consultation response form to make your concerns known.

Obs There is no 11-14 provision on the Sneyd site included in the

proposals.

➤ **Why not just reduce Sneyd's admission number so that there are no surplus places?**

A A schools admission number is based on the accommodation ie the size of the building. If the building was made smaller, there would be fewer surplus places. A Key Issue is that pupil numbers are falling each year and that the school is not viable.

Obs I went to Sneyd and the school did not fail me, I am at university now. Falling pupil numbers is not due to the staff or the school. The Headteacher should be given a chance to improve the school. It is the behaviour of the pupils that is the problem and the headteacher has already made some changes to improve this, for example he introduced prefects and as a result pupils started to attend classes and stopped loitering around the school. There is constant focus on 5 A-C's and falling numbers, but these are not proper statistics – they don't reflect the improvements that are being made by the school.

A Sneyd was previously in special measures but made sufficient improvement to come out of the category. Unfortunately the school was unable to sustain the improvement and received a Notice to Improve last November.

Obs I felt I had a lot of support throughout my school life at Sneyd, I was not aware of any fall in standards within the school.

Obs What's the point of engineering status?

A The government has asked us to investigate the viability of a 14-19 engineering academy in Walsall, but this is just one possibility for the Sneyd site.

Obs The choice of subjects available for sixth form pupils at Frank F Harrison is very limited. Pool Hayes and Sneyd have worked together for some time to provide a wider range of subjects.

A A skills centre or a 14– 19 academy could provide a increased variety of subjects for post 16 pupils to study.

➤ **What is a skills centre?**

A A skills centre would offer a range of courses for young people from the local community. The centre would be run in partnership with schools. Pupils would remain on the roll of their school and access courses at the skills centre on a part time basis.

Obs If the council wants educational provision to continue on the Sneyd site they should consider an 11-19 academy rather than just provision for 14 – 19 year olds.

➤ **The options that suggest pupils transfer to Frank F and Pool Hayes are not practical. Pool Hayes is too far for pupils living near to Sneyd to travel. With Frank F the problem is not just the journey, parents would simply not want their children to attend the school.**

A Please write these concerns on the consultation response form.

Obs The three schools mentioned in the options for Sneyd pupils to transfer to are not achieving better results than Sneyd. Why send Sneyd pupils to other schools that are underachieving?

A Standards and results at Sneyd are significantly lower than at other schools.

➤ **If Sneyd closes, won't there be a shortage of places in the area in the future?**

A Projections have been made for several years into the future taking into account birth rate data from the PCT and proposed housing developments to ensure that there will be sufficient school places.

➤ **Who will make the final decision about Sneyd?**

A A report on the consultation will be submitted to Cabinet and if they decide to go ahead with one of the proposals a statutory notice would be published in September and the final decision would be made by Cabinet in November 2009.

### Parent of year 7 pupil

➤ **I am concerned by proposals to close Sneyd school. My older child attended the school and I think it is a good school. What will happen to the building if the school does close?**

- A The council would like educational provision to continue on the site if Sneyd school does close. At the moment we are looking into the viability of opening a 14-19 Engineering Academy or a Skills Centre on the site, but at this stage these are just ideas for what could happen in the future.
- 

### **Parent of year 9 pupil**

➤ **Will Sneyd be turned into a 14-19 School?**

- A All the options being considered in the current consultation involve the closure of Sneyd school. The council has indicated that they would like educational provision to continue on the site if Sneyd school does close and we are looking into the viability of opening either a 14-19 Engineering Academy or a Skills Centre on the site, but these are just ideas at the moment for what could happen in the future.

➤ **Will the school be retained for education use?**

- A The council would like educational provision and community resources to continue on the Sneyd site.

➤ **When will a decision be made?**

- A A report on the outcome of the consultation will be submitted to cabinet in July. If cabinet decides to go ahead with one of the proposals a statutory notice will be published in September and Cabinet will make the final decision in November 2009.

➤ **I have a child who is in Year 5 at the moment. What happens if I put Sneyd as one of my preferences on the secondary form and the school closes?**

- A You are allowed 5 preferences on the form so if Sneyd is your first preference, this should go at the top. You should then list your other preferred schools in the order that you would like them to be considered. If Sneyd closes after you have returned your form, we will try to offer your highest alternative preference.
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## Parents of year 8 pupils

### ➤ **Why can't another school close instead of Sneyd?**

A It is not viable for Sneyd to remain open because of the decline in educational standards and pupil numbers.

### ➤ **What is an Engineering Academy?**

A The Engineering Academy would be very different to the other academies in the area. It would be a regional academy which means it would encourage applications from pupils across the region, not just Walsall residents. Pupils would have to apply for a place at the end of KS3, no Walsall pupils would be guaranteed a place automatically.

### ➤ **When will we know what is going to happen?**

A A report on the consultation will be submitted to Cabinet in July. If a decision is made to proceed with one of the options a statutory notice will be published in September and a final decision on the closure of Sneyd would be made by Cabinet in November 2009.

### ➤ **What if I don't want my child to attend another Walsall school?**

A If Sneyd closes you could apply for a place at any school in any borough and if there were places available your child would be admitted. If your preferred schools were full you would be offered the right of appeal.

### ➤ **My children are doing well at Sneyd. There are worse schools in the borough. Why not close them?**

A Standards and results at Sneyd are significantly lower than at other schools across the borough and Sneyd is actually in the bottom 9% of all schools in the country. This on its own doesn't mean that Sneyd is underperforming, we also look at Contextual Value Added which compares the levels children were working at when they start at the school to their results at the end of KS4, this shows the progress they have made. Schools like grammar schools which admit higher achievers have fairly low value added because the pupils they admit in year 7 are already over achieving.

Where schools admit pupils of lower ability they have a better chance of improving their outcomes, but Sneyd is in the bottom 1% of all schools in the country for CVA, and this shows that the pupils are not making the progress that they should. The Local Authority has a duty to provide the best education it can for all pupils and this is demonstratively not happening at Sneyd. All we are trying to do is find a way of giving all Walsall children a chance of success.

➤ **I have heard bad things about all the schools that are mentioned in the consultation document and my child doesn't want to go somewhere where she will be bullied?**

A Parents and children will have the opportunity to look round the schools before deciding where they want to go. A lot of work would be done prior to children transferring to any of the school mentioned in the consultation document to ensure that the transition was as smooth as possible. This might include combined sports events and drama productions and joint trips.

➤ **I don't want to leave it till the end to move my child because teachers will leave and the remaining children won't get a good education. Also we might end up with no choice. If I move my child in September and Sneyd doesn't close, can I move her back?**

A You can apply through the standard Midyear admissions process, but moving your child twice in one year would be very disruptive. Previous school closures have also demonstrated that children feel less concerned when they move as a group rather than individually, but at the end of the day it is your decision you need to think about your own child and his/her needs and do what you think is best.

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## **Two Parents of two Year 8 pupils**

➤ **When would our children leave Sneyd if the school closes?**

A It is dependant on which if any of the 3 options is chosen. If option A or B was chosen your children would complete KS3 at Sneyd and transfer to a new school at the start of Year 10 in September 2010. If option C was chosen they would transfer to Frank F Harrison on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

➤ **When will we know if the school is going to close?**

A A report on the consultation will be submitted to Cabinet in July, and if a decision is taken to proceed with one of the options for the closure of Sneyd a statutory notice would be published in September. A final decision would be made by Cabinet in November 2009.

➤ **How will we know what is happening?**

A We will write to parents in July to let them know cabinet's decision and if the proposal goes forward we will write again at various times throughout the process to let you know what is happening.

➤ **Is there a chance that the school could stay open?**

A The final decision to close Sneyd will not be taken until November. Cabinet could decide in July not to proceed with any of the options that are currently under consultation, but the school has been given notice to improve and is underperforming and there has been a steady decline in pupils numbers and these problems will not go away if the school remains open.

➤ **So the school is going to close no matter what?**

A All the options under consultation involve the closure of Sneyd, but a final decision has not yet been taken and Cabinet could decide in July not to go ahead with any of the 3 options.

➤ **Can my child come back if Sneyd becomes a 14-19 Academy?**

A It would not be a case of coming back because Sneyd school would no longer exist. If a 14-19 Engineering Academy opens all Walsall residents would be able to apply for a place for their child at the end of KS3, but they would not be guaranteed a place and pupils from outside the borough could also apply.

➤ **We're trying to keep our children and their friends together. Have you any children? What would you do in our circumstances?**

A If the school does close the admissions team would work with parents to try to keep friendship groups together. I cannot tell you what you should do, you need to consider the way that this proposal will affect your own children.



➤ **Whose fault is it that the school is not doing well? Is it down to the teachers or to the behaviour of the pupils?**

A The school is not meeting targets for a variety of reasons which are explained in the Ofsted report. If Ofsted believes that a school is failing, closing it is not letting the children down; it is giving them the chance of a better education elsewhere.

➤ **Dr Sweeney said standard levels are going up, so why not allow him time to make the necessary improvements?**

A Standards at the school don't appear to be going up. The level of improvement that is required to meet the expected standards hasn't been achieved

➤ **Have building works started at Frank F Harrison yet? Will Year 9 move to the Frank F Harrison site or will they be educated in the Sneyd building.**

A Frank F Harrison has been identified to receive a new building under the Building Schools for the Future program and this work will go ahead whatever happens with Sneyd. Two of the options involve the school expanding to accommodate Sneyd pupils and if one of these was taken forward the new building would have to be bigger.

➤ **Why are you considering opening a 14-19 Academy rather than an 11-19 Academy? If Sneyd becomes a 14-19 Academy how does it affect the current Year 8?**

A An 11-19 academy is not viable on the Sneyd site because of the falling pupils numbers. Sneyd will not become a 14 – 19 Academy, all the proposals under consultation involve the closure of Sneyd school. The Council has indicated that if Sneyd school closes they would like educational provision to continue on the site and the opening of a 14-19 Engineering Academy is one way in which this could be achieved. If a 14-19 academy opened no one would automatically transfer to the school, but all Walsall pupils would have the opportunity to apply for a place at the end of KS3, and pupils from outside the borough could also apply.

➤ **It would be very disruptive to move a child at the end of Year 9 to start Year 10 at another school. I don't want to move my child but if I**

**had to do so, I would prefer her to go to Frank F Harrison. But I'm concerned about the distance she would have to travel.**

A You may qualify for a bus pass if you meet the criteria. If the school does close it is important for parents to explain the situation to their children. Schools will be aware of the disruption for children and will do everything to make the transition as smooth as possible.

➤ **If we chose a school that did not have places would we have to send our children to a school that is possibly underachieving?**

A If you apply for a place at a school which is full you would have the right of appeal and parents would be given support by the admissions team and the choice advice service to find an appropriate school place for their children.

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### **Parent of Year 7 pupil**

➤ **I have just moved my daughter from Pool Hayes and she is doing better at Sneyd and her attendance has improved. Can you explain the 3 options?**

A Details of the options were given.

Obs I prefer option B because the gradual transfer would minimise the disruption.

Obs I can't understand why Sneyd would close because the sports facilities and the facilities for disabled pupils are so good. There would be no need to spend money for facilities elsewhere when they already exist in Sneyd.

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## Parent of Year 8 and 9 pupil

- **The threat of closure was leaked to the press before parents were informed and this has had a negative effect on the children and parents from the outset.**

A Any discussion around closure of a school is unsettling for everyone involved.

- **Why was Frank F Harrison chosen when the school also has problems?**

A Frank F Harrison has improved its results in recent years and the school is currently oversubscribed because parents are choosing to apply for their children to go there.

- **What is a skills centre? Is it the same as the Ruiz Centre?**

A No the Ruiz Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit which provides education for permanently excluded pupils until they obtain a place at a new school. A skills centre is very different to a PRU. If a skills centre is built, pupils would remain on the roll of their existing school and attend the centre on a part-time basis. The skills centre would offer courses suitable for pupils of all levels of ability and would extend their curriculum options.

- **Will my children be guaranteed a place at Frank F Harrison if Sneyd closes?**

A Frank F Harrison would be enlarged under option C and Sneyd pupils would transfer in September 2010. The other options would see Sneyd pupils transferring to a variety of schools. Regardless of which option were chosen you could always apply to any school you wanted either in Walsall or any other area and would be offered the right of appeal if the school did not have a place available. If Sneyd closes the Admissions Team and the choice adviser will work with parents to support them through the process of finding an alternative school.

- **Why did Sneyd come out of Special Measures and then go back in?**

A After Sneyd was placed in Special Measures the school made sufficient progress to come out of the category, but unfortunately the school was unable to sustain the progress and when it was inspected by Ofsted in November last year it was given a notice to improve.

➤ **We haven't been given enough notice about the plans to close the school.**

A There is a statutory process which has to be followed when an authority is considering closing a school and the timescales are prescribed by this process. We have to consider closure because of the poor standards and the decline in pupil numbers.

➤ **I am not happy that you are considering closing the school.**

A Please complete the consultation response form with your views on the closure of the school and the proposed options. The consultation responses will be included in the report which will go to Cabinet in July.

➤ **Will anyone look at the consultation responses?**

A Yes. All the consultation response will be read and will be included in the Cabinet report.

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**Parent of Year 10 pupil**

➤ **Will there be a sixth form at Sneyd after the current year?**

A If either option A or option B is taken forward there would be no pupils admitted to the sixth form at Sneyd in September 2010 and subsequent years, but pupils would have the opportunity to apply for admission to sixth form at other schools.

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**Parents of Year 9 and Sixth Form pupil**

➤ **We are concerned about our daughter who is currently in sixth form as she will have to find an alternative school or college which may not be able to offer the same courses.**

A If your daughter is currently in the sixth form and is following courses which would end in Year 12 she would be able to

complete her courses at Sneyd as none of the proposals under consultation involve the school closing before September 2010.

➤ **Our other daughter is choosing her options for Year 10. Will an alternative school have the same options as she has chosen?**

A If either option A or B was taken forward your daughter would complete KS4 at Sneyd. Under Option C she would transfer to Frank F Harrison in September 2010 at the end of Year 10. The Admissions Team and the Choice Adviser would work with you to help you find a place at an appropriate school.

➤ **Will we be allowed travel expenses if we have to relocate to another school at a greater distance than at present?**

A You might qualify for a free bus pass, depending on the distance your child would have to travel and your financial circumstances.

➤ **Our children are doing well at the school and we are worried that all this uncertainly and the possible eventual disruption will have a negative effect on them.**

A Please complete the consultation response form to make your views known. All consultation responses will form part of the report which will be submitted to Cabinet in July.

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**Parents of Year 8 pupils**

➤ **If Sneyd becomes a 14-19 Academy will pupils who are 14 years old at the time of the change be able to stay?**

A All options for consultation involve the closure of Sneyd. If the school closes it is possible that a 14-19 Engineering Academy could be opened on the site. If this happens no one will automatically be offered a place at the academy, but all Walsall pupils will have the opportunity to apply for admission at the end of KS3 if they wish to do so. Pupils living outside Walsall would

also be able to apply for admission to the Engineering Academy.

➤ **A lot of parents are saying that they do not want their children to go to Frank F Harrison, what can they do?**

A Please complete the consultation response form to make your views on the proposed options clear. If Sneyd does close the Admissions Team and the Choice Adviser would work with parents to support them through the process of finding a new school. Parents would be able to apply to any school in Walsall or in other boroughs and would have the right of appeal if a place could not be offered because the school was full.

➤ **What is a skills centre?**

A A skills centre would provide a variety of courses for pupils at all levels of ability. Pupils would remain on the roll of their existing school but would attend the centre on a part time basis to follow their chosen courses.

➤ **A lot of parents feel that their children are doing well at Sneyd and believe it is unfair that the school may close. They feel that with the upheaval their children will suffer and standards will be lowered.**

A The standard of education provided at Sneyd is not acceptable at the moment. We will do everything possible to minimise disruption if the school does close.

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**Parent of Year 6 pupil**

➤ **Our child is due to be admitted to Sneyd in September what will happen?**

A Children who have been offered a place at Sneyd for September will be admitted. If either option A or B is taken forward your child would have to transfer to an alternative school at the end of KS3. If option C was taken forward your child would transfer to Frank F Harrison at the end of Year 7 in September 2010.

➤ **Could my child go to Shelfield Community Academy in September instead of Sneyd?**

A All places at Sheffield have been allocated for September, but you could still apply for a place and would be offered the right of appeal.

➤ **What is a 14-19 Engineering Academy.**

A A 14-19 Engineering Academy would have a specialism in engineering but would teach the full curriculum as well as engineering related subjects. All Walsall pupils would be able to apply for a place at the end of KS3 and pupils living outside of Walsall could also apply.

➤ **When will a decision be made?**

A A report on the consultation will be submitted to Cabinet in July. Cabinet will then decide whether to proceed with one of the options. If an option is taken forward a statutory notice will be published in September and a final decision on the closure of Sneyd would be taken by Cabinet in November 2009.

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**Parent of children in Year 7, Year 10 and sixth form**

➤ **How would you decide which school Sneyd pupils would be placed in?**

A Parents would be asked for their preferences for an alternative school and we would try to keep siblings together. Parents who applied to schools which did not have places available would be offered the right of appeal.

➤ **We are worried about how our children would be treated in a new school.**

A Everyone would work hard to make sure that transition was smooth and that pupils became one school community.

➤ **How do we apply for places at the 14 – 19 Engineering Academy?**

A At the moment we are just looking at the viability of opening a 14-19 Engineering Academy in Walsall. If such a school did open it would not be a replacement for Sneyd and no one would automatically transfer. All Walsall pupils would be able to apply

for a place if they wished to do so and pupils from other boroughs could also apply.

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### **Parent of Pupils in Year 7 and Year 10**

➤ **Are these the only 3 options available?**

A Only these 3 options have been taken forward for consultation by Cabinet.

➤ **Engineering is a waste of time for our children, a 14-19 Engineering Academy has no relevance.**

A An engineering academy would be for pupils from across the region, not just from Walsall, it is not intended that it would be a replacement for Sneyd.

➤ **Our children would lose their school.**

A All 3 of the options involve the closure of Sneyd. But the admissions team and the choice adviser would work with parents to find an alternative school and everything would be done to ensure that the transition was as smooth as possible.

➤ **What preferences would there be when considering alternative schools? Option 'C' is the least worst option.**

A Whatever option was taken forward parents would be able to apply for a place at any school either in Walsall or in other areas and would have the right of appeal if they could not be offered a place at their preferred school.





Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College - held at school
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Parents Drop In Sessions
<b>Date:</b>	19 May 2009
<b>Time:</b>	5.00 – 7.30pm

### Questions, Comments and Responses

#### Parent of Year 7 and Year 8 pupil

- Obs News of the closure is disrupting my children's education. They have settled in and made friends. At the time of the year on year transfer they will be getting ready for GCSEs which would be very disruptive. At the time of the transfer to another school, the children will be attending different schools for a year which is a major concern I need to collect both children and obviously can't choose one over the other.
- **What is going to be done to ensure the Health & Safety of my children as they will be attending different schools for a year if the proposal goes ahead?**
- A There may be a possibility of reviewing start and finish times at schools so that parents can get children to both schools on time.
- **Sneyd is a good school – why will it close?**
- A Sneyd is not meeting the needs of its pupils. The school is not making significant progress or achieving the standards that are required. We have a duty to ensure the best interests of pupils are met.
- **Is it true that Sneyd is one of the schools that is making most**

### **improvement in relation to Contextual Value Added?**

A Sneyd's Contextual Value Added is in the lowest 1% in the country. Contextual Value Added is only one way of assessing performance with 5 A\* - C including English and Maths being the normal way of comparing performance.

#### ➤ **What will happen now?**

A A report on the consultation will be taken to Cabinet in July, if a decision is made to proceed with one of the options a statutory notice will be published in September and Cabinet will make a final decision in November 2009.

#### ➤ **What will happen to the Community Centre as it is widely used?**

A The council is keen to retain the community facilities on the site if the school closes.

#### ➤ **What is the cost of the new school uniform?**

A Unsure of the cost but the transfer would occur over the summer holidays which is a time when parents usually buy uniforms.

Obs It is the wrong decision as it will disrupt the children especially between doing GCSEs, the school is good and gives children good rewards i.e. school trips.

### **Parents of pupil – Year 7**

➤ **Our child is very worried about what is going to happen. We are considering moving our child from the school as we don't feel there is enough support for our child who has special needs, and discipline is an issue. School staff do not return phone calls and when we phone to speak to them they appear not to know our child. If we want to move our child now how do we do this?**

A Information was provided on the mid-year admissions process.

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## Parent of 2 pupils - year 7 and year 8

- **The decision to close the school has already been made and the school will get worse as there is no continuity for pupils.**

A No decision has been made at this time. We are consulting on possible options for the closure of the school and Cabinet will decide whether to proceed with one of these when they have read the report on the consultation in July.

- **This is one of the most modern buildings in the area – why do all the proposals involve closing it?**

A Yes it is one of the best in the area but the school has a lot of problems. Pupils numbers have been steadily declining because parents are not choosing to send their children to the school. Academic standards at the school are also below the level that is expected and the school was placed under Notice to Improve at the Ofsted inspection in November 2008.

- **Is the staffing a major issue or is it pupils' behaviour?**

A Staffing is always a challenge when pupil numbers fall because staff have to reduce. Reports state that behaviour has improved.

- **Should we take our children out of school now to guarantee continuity due to the threat of the closure so it doesn't affect them?**

A All three options are to close the school, it is Cabinet who has the final decision on the future of the school. It is your decision as a parent whether to change schools. The Council will help parents to find alternative schools whenever this takes place.

- **What will happen before children are phased into another school because teaching needs to be maintained and not suffer?**

A If one of the three options is taken forward by Cabinet we will do everything we can to ensure teaching and learning is of a good

quality (and provide extra help/ support when required).

➤ **If you were in my position – what would you do?**

A I cannot tell you what to do; you should consider how these options would affect your children.

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**Parent of pupils in Year 7, 8 and 10**

➤ **Will there be a re-build on Frank F Harrison site?**

A Yes, there will be a re-build on Frank F Harrison site as part of the Building Schools for the Future program, if pupils transfer to the school from Sneyd the new school building will be bigger.

➤ **Why wait until now?**

A When a school is placed in a category by Ofsted the local authority provides a lot of support to help them make the improvements that are required. Unfortunately the school has not been able to make sustained and significant improvements and standards and pupil numbers have continued to decline.

➤ **In the past there have been rumours that Sneyd is closing but nothing has happened. We would not be happy with Frank F Harrison as an alternative school, we have heard that children do not do homework.**

A All options under consultation involve the closure of Sneyd. Children transferring to Frank F Harrison forms part of two of the options, but in the event of the school's closure parents would of course have the opportunity to apply for a place at any school, and to appeal if their application was unsuccessful. All schools set homework.

➤ **What provisions will there be for transport?**

A Parents whose children qualify under distance and financial criteria would receive a free bus pass.

➤ **Why can't a new school be built on this site? Frank F Harrison is not a suitable site.**

A A new school building on the Frank F Harrison site has already been agreed under the Building Schools for the Future program. The falling pupil numbers at Sneyd do not make a new school viable.

➤ **Why can't Sneyd become an Academy?**

A Pupil numbers at Sneyd indicate that an 11-19 academy is not a viable option and this is not one of the options approved for by cabinet for consultation. We are looking at the feasibility of setting up a 14-19 Engineering Academy but this is in the very early stages.

➤ **Have they considered plans for the new school?**

A Not yet. No final decision will be taken on the closure of Sneyd until November 2009. It would be helpful if you could indicate on the response form which option you prefer, even if you do not want Sneyd to close.

➤ **How will education be covered whilst moving between 2 schools?**

A Children would not be moving between sites. It is possible that KS3 pupils would be taught on one site and KS4 and Post 16 on the other, until a new school is built.

Obs It would be nice if pupils could visit Frank F Harrison to see what they have to offer.

➤ **Frank F Harrison does not offer the range of options that Sneyd does.**

A This may change if the number of pupils increases (Options B and C)

➤ **We are not happy with the engineering specialist status of Frank F Harrison.**

A This does not mean that all children will be doing engineering, the school has to deliver the full curriculum.

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### Parent of Sneyd pupil

- **Could pupils currently in Year 10 complete Sixth Form at Sneyd?**
    - A With options A & B the pupil would finish KS4 at Sneyd and then access a Sixth Form place at another school.
  
  - **If a decision is not made by Cabinet would the process start over again?**
    - A This is a possibility.
- 

### Parent of Year 9 pupil

- **We have heard that the Ormiston Trust could sponsor an 11-19 Academy on the Sneyd site.**
    - A Cabinet are only consulting on 3 options, which do not include an 11-19 Academy.
  
  - **So my child could do Years 10 and 11 at Sneyd but not sixth form?**
    - A If the school closes your child would not be able to do sixth form studies at Sneyd, but would be able to apply for entry to sixth form at other schools in Walsall.
- 

### Parent of Sneyd pupil

- **There only seems to be one option: Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall with Sneyd definitely closing. I am moving house shortly and would prefer to stay at Sneyd. I don't want to move my boys twice. I had already been through a school closure in the past and ended up with two boys at 2 different schools.**
  - A If the school does close we will try to keep siblings together where ever possible and the Admissions Team and Choice Adviser will provide advice and support to parents with finding

an alternative school place.

Obs A lot of money would be spent on Frank F Harrison for Option C.

➤ **How are you going to get teachers to stay during the phased option – if we're only left with supply teachers, they won't know the pupils as well as the class teachers do.**

A There are staffing issues and recruiting staff can be a problem. There are also difficulties with filling vacancies, especially for maths and science teachers.

Obs The disruption to children is inevitable. They are asking questions such as "What school will we be at?" "What is going to happen?"

I understand there is no option of keeping Sneyd open but both my boys would refuse to attend Frank F Harrison because of the bullying that goes on there.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

Location:	Mossley Primary School
Meeting with:	Parents Drop In Sessions
Date:	20 May 2009
Time:	5.00 – 7.30pm

### Questions, Comments and Responses

#### Parents of pupil in Year 10 at Sneyd

- **We live in the area of the school and are keen that if the school closes the site be used for community use or other types of learning. We hope that the Council will continue to maintain the approaches to the school and the site in terms of grass cutting and litter collection.**
- **What arrangements will be made for our child to allow her to complete her KS4 education without any disruption etc. if the school closes?**

A If the school closes your child will remain at Sneyd to complete her KS4 education and consider her options at the end of Year 11 and then go to another school to undertake Post 16 education if that is what she wishes to do.

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#### Parent of Year 6, 9 and 10 pupils

Obs Not enough Year 7 places at other schools if Sneyd is going to close I would prefer my child to start Y7 at Pool Hayes

A As consultation is currently taking place there are places still



available at Sneyd as the school is still open. You should contact the Admissions Team if you want to change your preference to Pool Hayes for your child who starts Year 7 in September 2009. There are no places available at Pool Hayes at this stage in the admission round but if you change your preference you will have the right of appeal.

➤ **What schools have places still available in Year 7?**

A Alumwell, Blue Coat, Brownhills Darlaston and Joseph Leckie

➤ **These schools all have transport issues as they are too far away – what transport arrangements would be put in place, would there be assistance with cost?**

A Until the consultation process is completed we cannot give parents any guarantee as to what arrangements may be put in place. But children who qualify under the distance and financial criteria would receive a free bus pass.

➤ **Why is it not possible to increase the capacity at Pool Hayes?**

A The only way to achieve this within a short timescale would be to use mobile units.

➤ **What impact would this have on the curriculum?**

A The curriculum would still be delivered even if pupils were in mobile accommodation.

➤ **What about the cost of buying a new school uniform?**

A Whichever option was taken forward all children would transfer to a new school at the start of a new school year. Parents would usually buy new uniform at this time so additional cost would be minimal. A number of the uniforms are similar across the borough with the main differences being the blazer, badge, tie.

➤ **What are the options for the 3 schools increasing Y7 intake by one class in order to cater for the children from Sneyd this year. It is very disruptive for a child to have to move to two different schools?**

A As no decision has been made on the closure of Sneyd at this time, Year 7 admissions to the school will go ahead as planned.

➤ **How do we know that the increase in capacity will be guaranteed in the future.**

A There would be statutory proposals for whichever option cabinet may wish to take forward. These will secure the proposed changes.

➤ **Why could Sneyd not become an 11-19 Academy**

A None of the proposals put forward for consultation are for Sneyd to become an Academy and the declining pupil numbers indicate that 11-19 provision is not viable on the site.

➤ **What is the availability of places in Sixth Forms? I have a child in Year 10**

A There are plenty of places available within Sixth Forms across the borough.

➤ **If I add Pool Hayes to my Y7 preference form what happens if there are no places left?**

A You have the right of appeal.

➤ **Would I have to go to attend the Appeal Hearing?**

A Not if you do not wish to, you can state your case by sending in a letter to be considered at the Appeal Hearing

➤ **How long does the appeal process take?**

A Most appeals are dealt with before the end of the summer term.

➤ **What happens if the appeal fails?**

A Your daughter would still have a place at the school which was originally offered to you.

➤ **What assurances can you give parents that the pupils who remain at Sneyd will be provided with a good standard of education?**

A The LA will make sure that standards are not slipping and the achievement of the pupils will be closely monitored. Once a decision has been made to close a school a Support Group is formed which will include staff from receiving and feeder

schools. Receiving schools have a lot of interest in making sure that the pupils are achieving good results. When pupil numbers at a school declines the school has to reduce staff so the receiving and feeder schools work together to support the closing school. Additional finance, shared teaching, classes being brought together are part of the support and it has been found that children achieve better than expected under these circumstances.

➤ **Concerned that all the good teachers will leave the closing school**

A It can depend on the age of the teaching staff, some may gain financially by staying if they are near to retirement . Others may choose to stay with the pupils until the school closes, and possibly apply for a job at a “receiving school”.

➤ **Would the pupils get the same sort of support when they transfer after 2-3 years at Sneyd. I am concerned that my child would not know any other pupils.**

A By the time they move the pupils will be well aware of the school they are transferring to and support for the transition process will be put in place.

For a “receiving school” there are a lot of benefits of recruiting staff from the closing school as they have knowledge of the pupils, families, relationships, etc., and this could greatly assist the “receiving school” as well as the pupils.

➤ **Will parents of children remaining at Sneyd be consulted on the arrangements to be made to integrate their children into their new schools?**

A We have not reached that level of detail yet but consideration will be given to this at the next stage.

➤ **If the receiving schools can accommodate the children in 2-3 years time why can't the pupils transfer now.**

A There is not enough time to ensure that additional accommodation, staff, furniture, etc., is in place for when pupils start in September. No final decision has yet been taken about the future of Sneyd.

**We feel that it is really important to ensure that parents are kept**

**informed of the process and receive regular communication. Some parents have been confused about the situation due to leaks and rumours about the proposals and had to wait quite a while to receive official information on the proposals; this had made them angry, anxious and confused over what was actually happening.**

**Head Teacher from Mossley Primary stated many pupils from the school transfer to Sneyd in Year 7, but although she had read the consultation document, little other information had been received about the proposals and, therefore, she was unable to provide advice and re-assurance to any parents who may have wanted to discuss the proposals with her.**

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#### **Parent of Year 7 pupil**

- **My daughter is currently in Year 7 and my main worry is that in Year 9 when she chooses her exam options, she will have to move to another school to do her exam courses?**

A Under the options your daughter would continue at Sneyd until she has finished KS3

- **My daughter wanted to go to Frank F Harrison originally and I would rather her move now and not wait until 2011 / 2012.**

A There are no places remaining at Frank F Harrison for admission in September, but if you want to add the school to your preferences you should contact the Admissions Team and you will be offered the right of appeal.

- **Are the children going to get the same level of education over the next 2 years if the school is going to close after 2 years?**

A A lot of support would be given to the school to ensure that children received an appropriate standard of education.

- **Is an 11-19 academy an option?**

A No, 11-19 Academy is not one of the options being consulted upon. Pupils numbers at Sneyd indicate that this option would

not be viable.

➤ **Would children automatically go into the 14-19 engineering academy?**

A No one would automatically transfer to the engineering academy, pupils would have to apply to a place and pupils from neighbouring boroughs as well as Walsall pupils would be able to apply.

➤ **My daughter has special learning needs and I feel that I do not want to wait 2 years for her to transfer to a new school because of the disruption and I would like to see her settled in a new school as soon as possible, as her close friends are already at Frank F Harrison.**

A If you want to move your child to a new school you should contact the Admissions Team or the Choice Adviser who will explain the application process to you. If you apply for a place at a school which is full in your daughter's year group you will be offered the right of appeal.

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**Parent of children in Year 8 and Year 6**

➤ **If a child is happy and progressing well at a school, then why should the individual be moved to a 14-19 Academy?**

A No one would be moved against their wishes, it would be up to parents to decide whether they wished to apply for a place at the academy. If a 14-19 Engineering Academy was to open pupils from neighbouring boroughs as well as Walsall could apply for a place.

Obs I don't think the Headteacher at Sneyd has been given sufficient time in his post to make the necessary improvements. I am also unhappy about the number of supply teachers currently teaching at Sneyd.

A The use of supply teachers is a management issue for the school.

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**Parent of year 7 Sneyd pupil**

- **I applied for a place at Frank F Harrison but the school was oversubscribed and I accepted a place in Sneyd. I would now like to move my daughter to Frank F Harrison.**

If you have decided that you would like to move your child to a new school, you should contact the admissions team or the choice adviser who will explain the application process to you.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

Location:	Elmore Row Community Centre
Meeting with:	Parent Drop In Sessions
Date:	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2009
Time:	5.00pm- 8.00pm

### Questions, Comments and Responses

#### Parent of Year 6 pupil offered place at Sneyd for Year 7

- **We are concerned about the rotation of teachers and the number of teachers leaving due to the proposals.**

A Everything will be done to try and encourage teachers to stay at Sneyd.

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#### Parent of pupil

- **Our child took the Walsall Academy exam but was unsuccessful. We made the decision to go to Sneyd because it was closer to home. We would prefer Sneyd to close in one go rather than have the disruption to our child when taking their options.**

A Under options A and B a phased closure would take place which would lessen any disruption and your child would leave at the end of KS3. However under Option C your son would transfer at the end of Year 7 to a new school.

---

## Parent of pupil

- **We were quite happy to send our child to Sneyd because we have had two other children who went to the school and have done very well there. One child is now at university and another child is now teaching.**

A Some children are still doing very well at Sneyd. But the school has not been achieving acceptable results for the majority of children. Something has to be done for all of the children.

- **We would prefer to decide to choose another school because of concerns over the effect it may have on the level of teaching.**

A Walsall's independent choice advisor will be happy to give you advice and support on making all applications

- **When will the final decision be made?**

A The consultation period ends on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Cabinet will meet in July and if a decision is made to proceed with one of the options it will go to the next stage and a statutory notice will be published in September. After a six week representation period Cabinet would make a final decision in November.





**Walsall Children's Services**

# Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Frank F Harrison Engineering College
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<b>Meeting with:</b>	Student Council
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<b>Date:</b>	3 June 2009
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<b>Time:</b>	2 pm
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**PRESENT:**

<b>Walsall Children's Services - Serco</b>	<b>Frank F Harrison Engineering College</b>	<b>Others</b>
Avril Walton	1 Teacher	
Susan Lupton	12 Students	
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also and outlined the process of consultation. Pupils confirmed that they had received a copy of the consultation document. Questions were posed by the school council unless stated otherwise.

**Questions, Comments and Responses**

➤ **Will there be a big impact on Frank F Harrison Engineering College?**

- A For options B and C, Sneyd children would join Frank F Harrison. Options B and C would both mean that the school becomes larger. In option A, Sneyd pupils would be distributed amongst schools with empty places. In option B, extra places would be provided at Frank F

Harrison, Willenhall and Pool Hayes. Pupils would complete their Key Stage at Sneyd, and then move on to their new school. Walsall Children's Services would work with families to place children into new schools.

In option C, Frank F Harrison would increase in size and all Sneyd pupils would be offered a place at the school. Councillors are keen that the sports and community facilities at Sneyd are retained if the school closes.

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➤ **What will happen to children who live outside the borough?**

A They can choose to go to another school in Walsall if they want.

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➤ **Could Sneyd pupils go to the Walsall Academy?**

A This would be dependant on places being available at Walsall Academy.

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➤ **Would you pick the easiest option?**

A It is hard to say, because different people would prefer different options.

---

➤ **Would staff at Sneyd make the standards at Frank F Harrison drop?**

A We would not be merging the schools, so staff would not transfer to Frank F Harrison, although if Frank F Harrison has more pupils more teachers would be needed and some Sneyd teachers might wish to apply for any new posts that are created. Ofsted reports indicate that not all teachers are poor, some were very good.

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➤ **For option C, are you not just leaving Sneyd open?**

A No. Sneyd would close, but Frank F Harrison would use buildings on the Sneyd site until a new school is built.

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➤ **For option C, would the building be bigger?**

A Not straight away. To start with, pupils would be taught at the two sites. But the new build provided through Building Schools for the Future (BSF) would provide a new school on the Frank F Harrison site for all of the pupils.

---

➤ **Would we (the pupils at Frank F Harrison) get the opportunity to mix with Sneyd pupils before they come here?**

A This would be up to the schools, but we would expect that a transition group would be set up and would hope that there would be some mixing with the Sneyd pupils to ensure that there would be a seamless merging of the two schools if option C was the chosen option.

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➤ **In the event of option C being chosen, I feel that there could be some conflict between the two sets of children.**

A Safety of children is paramount, and measures would be put in place to ensure that any problems would be managed correctly. It may be that the rivalry only exists because there are two schools; if one school existed, we may find that the rivalries ended.

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➤ **Would our school receive money for a new building if option B or C was chosen?**

A A new building is proposed regardless of these options. With options B and C the building would need to be bigger.

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➤ **For option C, would the Key Stages be split onto different sites?**

A That would be one way of doing it, but ultimately it would be up to the governors to decide how the buildings would be used.

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➤ **Would the Sneyd building remain there, but under the Frank F Harrison name?**

A For option C, yes.

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➤ **Would a new building be on the Frank F Harrison site?**

A Yes.

We are also considering a 14-19 Engineering Academy that could be located on the Sneyd site. Another option is for there to be Skills Centre on the Sneyd site.

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➤ **Would Frank F Harrison be a new academy like Sheffield Academy?**

A No there are no plans for Frank F Harrison to become an Academy, an Academy is very different.

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➤ **What subjects would a Skills Centre offer? Would Drama be offered?**

A It would be run by a group of schools and other partners, who would make decisions on what curriculum would be offered.

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➤ **Would options at a Skills Centre be backed by demand for subjects?**

A Hopefully this would be how it worked.

Obs I think that a Skills Centre is a good idea.

Obs I think that option C is the best option as it would prove most cost effective.

Obs A lot of pupils from the same housing estates go to both Frank F Harrison and Sneyd, so option C is a good idea.

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➤ **If option C is chosen, would that start straight away?**

A Not straight away, it is a legal requirement that a process is followed which provides the opportunity for people to have a say. We are currently in a 6 weeks consultation period, and at the end of that period we will report back to cabinet to make a recommendation.

Obs I think option C would help the education of Sneyd pupils.

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➤ **How are the consultation meetings carried out at other schools?**

A The consultation meetings at Sneyd, Willenhall, and Pool Hayes are carried out in the same way as at Frank F Harrison.

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➤ **Could Sneyd stop open as Sneyd?**

A                    It could happen, ultimately it would be up to councillors to decide, but yes there is a possibility that they could reject all of the options and Sneyd would remain open.

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➤ **Could Sneyd pupils move to another school (besides Frank F Harrison) if option C is chosen?**

A                    Yes, they could choose to go to other schools, where places are available.

---

➤ **Do Willenhall have the same options?**

A                    We are consulting on the same options at all of the schools, however, Willenhall and Pool Hayes are only affected by option B

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The meeting was closed and the students were thanked for attending.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Frank F Harrison Engineering College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Staff
<b>Date:</b>	3 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	3.15pm

**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children's Services - Serco	Frank F Harrison Engineering College	Others
Avril Walton	Head Teacher	
Susan Lupton	86 Staff	
Kate Mann		
Karen Hollick		
David Whitehouse		

AW opened the meeting and outlined the process of consultation. Staff members confirmed that they had received a copy of the consultation document. Questions were posed by the staff unless stated otherwise.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

➤ **Have parents at Sneyd expressed an opinion?**

- A We have held 4 drop in sessions for Sneyd parents. Some parents said that they did not want their children to go to Sneyd in the first place, and we have also had a petition from another group who do not want Sneyd to close.

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➤ **Will a new build at Frank F Harrison be affected by this?**

A           BSF is likely to provide a new build for Frank F Harrison. The only change would be the size of the new building. Timescales of a new build would not be affected by this consultation. The size of the new build would be dependant on whether one of options B and C is chosen.

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➤ **Frank F Harrison is an Engineering College and Sneyd is a Maths and Computing College. What will happen to the Frank F Harrison specialist status if a Skills Centre or a 14-19 Engineering academy is opened?**

A           Your status would not change. It is part of the consultation that we are getting views on a potential Skills Centre or 14-19 Academy which potentially would be located on the Sneyd site. A 14-19 Engineering Academy would be a regional facility, so may only have a small impact on Frank F Harrison's pupil's numbers.

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➤ **If Frank F Harrison is split onto two sites, would the Sneyd staff continue at the Sneyd building, and the Frank F Harrison staff continue at the Frank F Harrison building?**

A           All options involve the closure of Sneyd. Option C is not an amalgamation. If Sneyd staff were unable to be placed into other jobs then they would be made redundant. There are some very good staff at Sneyd and potentially the governors at Frank F Harrison may choose to offer some of them jobs.

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➤ **Due to the number of pupils coming from Sneyd, have risks been assessed regarding this?**

A           We know how much space would be required at all schools involved, and risk assessments would be carried out when appropriate.

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➤ **Has consideration been given to the future of Sneyd Community**



### **Association?**

- A Councillors said that the CA is really important to the local community, and they want community facilities to continue on the Sneyd site.
- 

➤ **If Sneyd closes, how will the admissions work?**

- A If option B was the chosen option, then a managed admissions process would be operated and we would work closely with parents. Walsall Children's Services always recommend to parents that they leave their child at schools that potentially are closing. Parents can ask for mid year admissions.
- 

➤ **Who can staff write to give their opinions?**

- A At the back of the consultation document there is a consultation response form which needs to be returned to Susan Lupton. We are very keen to get responses from people.
- 

Please use your opportunity to respond to the consultation through response sheet included in consultation packs already provided, or the form can be downloaded from the Walsall Children's Services website.

Staff were thanked for attending and the meeting was closed. The head also thanked staff for attending.



**Walsall Children's Services**

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Frank F Harrison Engineering College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Governors
<b>Date:</b>	3 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	5.15pm

**PRESENT:**

<b>Walsall Children's Services - Serco</b>	<b>Frank F Harrison Engineering College</b>	<b>Others</b>
Avril Walton	4 Governors	
Susan Lupton	Headteacher	
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also outlined the process of consultation.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

➤ **Who are Walsall Children's Services? Are they part of Serco or Walsall Council?**

A Walsall Children's Services are part of Serco and Walsall Council. The government expectations are that the Education Department should be combined with Children's Services. Therefore when the new contract was signed Serco became part of Children's Services.

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- **Who will take over the responsibilities for the proposed 14-19 Academy within the borough?**

A This has not yet been determined.

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- **Is the decline in numbers at Sneyd due to a falling birth rate?**

A If that were solely the case then numbers at other schools would also have been affected, but this has not happened. In fact Frank F Harrison has seen a rise in the number of pupils on roll. Sneyd has become less popular with parents applying for school places for their children.

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- **Can we assume that people on the local estates such as Mossley have been going to out of borough schools such as Great Wyrley?**

A Some pupils have opted to go to out of borough schools and this has been the case for a long time as they are so close to the border. However, Walsall is also a net importer of pupils from other boroughs as well.

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- **When will the current Year 5's have to make their preferences?**

A They have until October 2009. Parents are encouraged to express more than one preference as it causes problems if they only give one preference and that school is over subscribed. The Choice Adviser has already contacted all primary schools to arrange meetings with parents of pupils due to transfer to secondary school in September 2010. This is the usual practice in order to make advice available to parents.

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- **With regards to Option C, how would the School organise itself over 2 sites?**

A At this point it has not been decided as it would be for Frank F Harrison to consider this.

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➤ **What is a Skills Centre and how will it affect Frank F Harrison?**

A A Skills Centre would extend the curriculum beyond that which schools can deliver individually. It would involve a group of schools working together, possibly with Walsall College, to offer a broader curriculum in line with local requirements.

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➤ **Would pupils be able to do NVQ's?**

A There would be a range of different courses and qualifications available for pupils. The details of this have not yet been considered.

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➤ **Please explain the concept of a 14-19 Engineering Academy and would this have an effect on Frank F Harrison's engineering specialism?**

A The Academy would be open to all pupils, including those from out of borough schools. Admission would be through an admission round in Year 9. There could be either an Academy or a Skills Centre - not both. Frank F Harrison would not automatically lose its specialist status.

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➤ **Will the falling standards at Sneyd impact on Frank F Harrison if pupils transfer from Sneyd?**

A Standards have dropped at Sneyd; however, statistics show the level of deprivation is actually worse at Frank F Harrison than at Sneyd. If option C is taken forward then Frank F Harrison would have a significantly larger admission number.

- 
- **There is the likelihood of an increase in traffic near the school; there have already been incidents with pupils on roads and this could be a recipe for even more accidents.**

A As part of a scheme to bring all pupils together onto the Frank F Harrison site, colleagues at the council would do an analysis of the traffic situation and advise on appropriate drop-off arrangements. It may be that governors of Frank F Harrison decide to introduce their own transport to help children get to school.

- 
- **What disruption would be caused by the need for new buildings and the temporary use of mobiles on site?**

A Mobiles would be used for option B. There are plans for a new build at Frank F Harrison and the current timescale for this is for completion in 2013. This is not dependant on any of the options in the consultation and will go ahead under BSF. The construction period may be 18 months. If option C is taken forward, the Sneyd buildings could be used during construction as well as other accommodation currently available on the Frank F Harrison site.

- 
- **What are the current numbers of pupils leaving Sneyd?**

A Children have been leaving Sneyd since rumours started and the consultation process began. Neighbouring authorities have also been approached by parents from Sneyd.

- 
- **Do the current Year 11's have the option of staying on in the 6<sup>th</sup> form at Sneyd?**

A Yes. This is taken into account in the proposals. There are difficulties currently with 6<sup>th</sup> form arrangements, in that at present part of the timetable is shared with Pool

Hayes. However, Pool Hayes is withdrawing from this arrangement.

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➤ **Frank F Harrison doesn't offer a wide range of A Levels. Would this be improved?**

A                    If option either B or C is taken forward it is likely there would be a wider choice of A Levels as there will be more pupils in the 6<sup>th</sup> form.

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➤ **Pupils at Sneyd have expressed concern at having to mix with pupils from Frank F Harrison.**

A                    Behaviour at Sneyd has never been an issue and so making new friends should not be a problem. They will still be with their friends from Sneyd as well. There will be a lot of support from Heads to put together activities that encourage the integration of the pupils from both schools e.g. mixed classes, sports events, drama productions etc. This should help the transition process run smoothly.

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➤ **Is there much staff turnover at Sneyd and if so, are the good teachers leaving?**

A                    Yes. The decline in numbers has lead to an increase in the number of teachers leaving. There is a need to try and retain staff to deliver the curriculum.

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➤ **Would community facilities be affected if Sneyd closes?**

A                    Councillors are very keen to retain Community activities on the Sneyd site, as it has a very active community association.

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➤ **What happens if Cabinet decides not to go ahead with any of the proposals?**

A            It has already been recognised that Sneyd is not a viable school due to falling standards and numbers on roll. Ultimately Walsall Children's Services has responsibility to address the standards issue and they would be faced with a failing school.

---

➤ **Is it true that people were prepared to take over and reopen Sneyd as an Academy?**

A            Standards in Walsall schools have risen in recent years in all schools except Darlaston and Sneyd. Resources have been put into several schools over recent years; these have generally contributed to improvements but standards have not risen at Sneyd and Darlaston. Sneyd itself would like to become an Academy and the scrutiny panel looked at various options including this, however Cabinet does not consider this to be a viable option. An Academy needs a sponsor, the support of the local authority and government approval in order to go ahead and this is not there.

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➤ **Does the consultation impact on Willenhall changing to Trust status?**

A            No. That is a decision for the school.

The meeting was then closed and everyone thanked for attending.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

Location:	Frank F Harrison
Meeting with:	Parents Drop In Sessions
Date:	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2009
Time:	6.30pm-8.30pm

### Questions, Comments and Responses

- **Why is the Council considering the closure of Sneyd school?**
  - A There has been a steady fall in pupil numbers over recent years and many of the pupils who are admitted in Year 7 did not want to go to the school but were allocated a place because their parents' preference for another school could not be met. The school has shown a general decline in standards and exam results are below those which the government expects pupils at the school to achieve. The school is currently failing its pupils and improvements have to be made. We are now at the stage of consulting on the 3 options all of which involve the closure of Sneyd.
  
- **Will there be enough spaces at Frank F Harrison for future pupils because we would like our youngest child to also be able to attend Frank F Harrison?**
  - A If Sneyd does close and either option B or C are implemented additional places would be provided at Frank F Harrison. When moving children from Sneyd every effort would be made to keep children from the same family together, and siblings are given priority under Frank F Harrison's admission arrangements so your application for your younger child to transfer to the school would be assessed under this criteria.



➤ **If Sneyd does close would there be any effect on the present pupils at Frank F Harrison?**

A Through the BSF programme it is planned to erect a new building on the Frank F Harrison site. The Sneyd site would then be used in conjunction with Frank F Harrison while building work goes ahead. If the Sneyd proposal goes ahead, then the Frank F Harrison rebuild will be large enough for the extra school population. If the school becomes larger it may give the existing pupils more options.

➤ **When will a final decision be made?**

A Consultations are taking place at the moment. The period of consultation ends on 19 June 2009. A full report which will include the responses to the consultation will then be taken to Cabinet who will decide at their meeting on 15 July whether to take one of the options forward to the next stage. If the decision is taken to progress with any of the options a statutory notice will be published in September. There will then be a representation period in which responses to the chosen option can be made and then a final decision will be made by Cabinet in November 2009. Pupils, parents, staff and governors will be kept informed at each stage of this process.

➤ **Our eldest son would like to go into the sixth form at Frank F Harrison will there be places available?**

A Sixth form places for Frank F Harrison will not be effected by any additional pupils who transfer to the school if Sneyd closes.

➤ **What would happen to the teaching staff at Sneyd if it were to close?**

A If Sneyd closes Walsall Children's Services – Serco will give the teachers help and support to find jobs. If Frank F Harrison was enlarged to accommodate the Sneyd pupils additional teachers would be needed and the governors of Frank F Harrison might decide to employ some of the teachers from Sneyd. If anyone was unable to find alternative employment before the school closed they would be made redundant.

- **Frank F Harrison is a very good school, we are only concerned about any possible disruption to our children if the school expands and are keen to ensure that our youngest child obtains a place when they transfer to secondary school.**

A If your youngest child has a sibling on roll at the school at the date of admission, he would be considered under this criterion.

---

#### **Parent of Year 6 pupil**

- **Can you explain the consultation and what will happen to Frank F Harrison School.**

A Consultation was explained. Number of admissions into Sneyd have fallen dramatically and there are real concerns about the standard of education. Sneyd went into special measures and after improving for a while the school was given a notice to improve in November 2008.

The three options (A, B, and C) were explained as was how the options would affect Frank F Harrison. The school is due to have a new building through BSF strategy. If as a result of the Sneyd closure the school were to take a large intake there would be mobiles placed for temporary classes with a minimum disruption while building work was completed.

Please complete the response form at the back of the consultation document and return by the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009 to let Cabinet know your views.



Walsall Children’s Services

# Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Pool Hayes Arts and Community College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Student Council
<b>Date:</b>	4 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	2 pm

**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children’s Services - Serco	Pool Hayes Arts and Community College	Others
Avril Walton	1 Teacher	
Susan Lupton	9 Students	
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also outlined the process of consultation.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

- **Question to Student Council: Do you have any contact with people associated with Sneyd?**
  - A Yes, I have a cousin who goes there.
  - Obs There is a small site here, so I do not think it is practical to have another 300 children on this site.
  - Obs Option B is not practical because of the small corridors and small classrooms, and I think that teacher/pupil relationships will suffer.

➤ **Question to School Council: What do you think would be the main issues with the building if Option B was chosen?**

A            There is not enough room on this site for the extra pupils.

Obs            At the moment lunchtimes are very busy despite the fact that many of us go off site for lunch. From September pupils will not be allowed off site at lunch times and this will make lunch a really busy time. An additional 300 pupils on top of that would be even worse and queues for the canteen would be very long.

A            Until the new building was built, lunchtimes would be busier.

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➤ **Question to School Council: Do you have any rivalries with Sneyd?**

Obs            There have been times in the past where pupils have come from Sneyd to Pool Hayes on teacher training days to cause trouble.

A            Activities could be arranged for the pupils from the two schools to get to know each other; this would help greatly when the transfer took place. The pupils transferring from Sneyd could also gradually start wearing Pool Hayes uniforms instead of replacing items of Sneyd uniform.

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➤ **Obviously there would be a strain on resources, so when would extra money for the new pupils get to Pool Hayes?**

A            Funding is based on the January School Census.

Obs            Will that not mean a delay in funding getting to the school after the new pupils have arrived?

A Yes, but we would have to allow for this in funding for the previous year, so it would not be a problem.

---

➤ **How would the closure affect Sneyd's Community Association?**

A Councillors have said that they want community facilities to continue on the Sneyd site.

Obs Would this be as part of the 14-19 Academy?

A This is possible, but nothing has been decided yet. The 14-19 Academy would be available for pupils from any of the neighbouring LA's as well as Walsall pupils. It may be that subjects could be available there that your own school is unable to offer. Discussions are at an early stage and nothing has been decided yet. Wolverhampton University and Walsall College are keen to be involved and are keen for subjects to be offered around 'clean engineering'. Local employers also think that this is a good idea.

Another possibility is a skills centre where pupils would not be on roll, but would attend there one or two days a week to study subjects that their school might not be able to offer.

Please complete a response form to let us know your opinions on both of these ideas.

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➤ **Our sixth form have a partnership with Sneyd. Some of the teachers have left as a result of the consultation, what measures will be put into place to ensure that teaching standards do not suffer?**

A Walsall Children's Services and the Black Country Challenge are providing support to ensure that the standards of teaching are maintained. Staff are not leaving just because the future of the school is in doubt,

staff numbers have had to be reduced because of the decline in pupil numbers.

---

➤ **Why is an engineering academy needed when Frank F Harrison is already an engineering college?**

A                      Currently there is not an opportunity for pupils wanting to specialise in engineering at KS4 to move to an appropriate school as Frank F Harrison Engineering College is full.

---

➤ **If Sneyd were to close in 2010 would there be enough space for all of the children?**

A                      There are sufficient surplus places in Walsall, but pupils would have limited choice and some would have to travel further away to school.

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➤ **The Chair made a statement on behalf of the Student Council:**

The Student Council's preferred option is Option A, followed by Option C. We would least like Option B because of the proposed enlargement of our school and concerns around the control of pupils. We are also concerned that additional pupils would result in an increase in the volume of traffic dropping pupils off at the front gates.

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➤ **Could the specialism of the 14-19 Academy be arts rather than engineering?**

A                      The government has asked Walsall to consider a 14-19 Engineering Academy.

Obs                    There are already 2 Engineering colleges nearby – Frank

F Harrison and Wednesfield Engineering College in  
Wolverhampton.

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➤ **Would a Skills Centre be different to an Engineering Academy, and what subjects would be offered?**

A            The engineering academy would have to teach the National Curriculum including Maths, English, and Science. There would be either an engineering academy or a skills centre, not both. Pupils who attended the engineering academy would have the option to transfer to the sixth form at another school to follow different A level course if they wanted to do so.

---

The meeting was closed and the students were thanked for attending.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

Location:	Pool Hayes Arts and Community College
Meeting with:	Staff
Date:	4 June 2009
Time:	3.15pm

**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children's Services - Serco	Pool Hayes Arts and Community College	Others
Avril Walton	Head Teacher	
Susan Lupton	38 Staff	
Kate Mann		
Primula Paul		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also outlined the process of consultation.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

- **Has there been an analysis of why Sneyd's standards are dropping? Could this be teaching standards, or the student population becoming more challenging?**

A                    There has been quite a high turnover of staff at Sneyd since the school was put into special measures. Younger more ambitious staff may have chosen to move on. Some parents have chosen to move their children elsewhere, therefore numbers have reduced which means numbers of staff also have to be reduced.

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- **Is there any evidence that there is a difficult social group that originally were at Forrest Secondary School before transferring to Manor Farm Secondary when Forrest closed and then to Rushall Community College which also closed, before finally the pupils transferred to Sneyd?**

A Pupils at Rushall Community College were transferred to Sheffield when Rushall closed. It is not the children who are pulling the school standards down, the school is not performing.

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- **How well equipped are Frank F Harrison to take on Sneyd pupils if option C was the preferred option?**

A The Sneyd building would be used until the new school building was built. So there would not be accommodation issues with this option.

Obs A large increase in pupil numbers would be the death for this school. There is not enough space for the extra children on this site.

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- **How many schools in Walsall have temporary accommodation?**

A A few schools in Walsall do have temporary accommodation. Joseph Leckie have had quite a lot of duplex units which will be removed this summer when their new block is opened. There is nothing else in Walsall on this scale at the present time.

Option B would result in a significant amount of temporary accommodation at Pool Hayes, Willenhall, and Frank F Harrison and the money that was spent on mobile classrooms could not be spent on a new build.

Obs I would not want to teach in a mobile classroom and I would not want my child being taught in one.

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➤ **What will the Sneyd site be used for if Sneyd does close?**

A           The government has asked us to look at the possibility of opening a 14-19 Engineering Academy in Walsall. The academy would be open to pupils from Walsall and neighbouring authorities. It would be funded in the same way as a school. Various issues would need to be looked at before this could be taken forward. No decision has been made as to how much of Sneyd's site or building would be used if this went ahead.

A 14-19 academy would require an admissions round, and it would need to be operated so that young people in neighbouring authorities would not be disadvantaged by distance.

Another proposal under consideration is a skills centre which would be run by a group of secondary schools in partnership with Wolverhampton University and Walsall College. Pupils would remain on the roll of their existing school but would may spend one or two days a week at the centre studying subjects that could not be offered at their own school.

Councillors are very keen for community facilities to continue on the Sneyd site.

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➤ **In the table at the bottom of page 4 in the consultation document the provision of additional places at Pool Hayes is listed as an advantage, how is this perceived as an advantage, and how does it fit into the secondary strategy?**

A           It would be an advantage for the local community to have additional places available at a popular school.

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➤ **Is there any correlation between bumped redundancy and the option that is chosen?**

- A            There is no correlation to whichever option is chosen. Bumped redundancies would be offered at a borough wide level to employees of all schools.

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The meeting was closed and the staff were thanked by the Headteacher and by Avril Walton for attending the meeting.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Pool Hayes Arts and Community College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Governors
<b>Date:</b>	4 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	5.30pm

**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children's Services - Serco	Pool Hayes Arts and Community College	Others
Avril Walton	9 Governors	
Susan Lupton	Headteacher	
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also outlined the process of consultation.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

➤ **We do not think that option B is viable due to the size of the Pool Hayes site. We do not have room for temporary accommodation.**

A Your Student Council also raised this point. The students said they were concerned that the excellent relationships they currently have with staff would suffer if another 300 pupils were put into their school.

Obs Class sizes would be larger as well.

A Classes would be full, but the budget would also increase to reflect the extra numbers of children.

Obs We would not have any more catering facilities which would be a problem. Also the falling birth-rate in the



region is a concern as if number of places increases and student numbers subsequently drop we could be left with surplus capacity. We are also concerned about having to have challenging pupils admitted to our school.

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➤ **If Option C is chosen, and Frank F Harrison take on most of the Sneyd pupils, will that mean they are pushed up the new build list?**

A Frank F Harrison and Pool Hayes are in the same Wave of BSF, and this consultation will not affect the timing of the new build.

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➤ **Could the admissions criteria for the Walsall Academy be changed to enable more pupils who live locally to get a place?**

A The academy has two zones and allocates places within each zone through banding. Their admission arrangements were agreed with the Secretary of State.

Obs I used to sit on the Education Board, and I know that there was a restriction of places for local students at Walsall Academy. This was at the request of Walsall to help protect local schools. Has this been looked at in relation to this consultation?

A No.

Obs I would like this looked at.

A The admission arrangements for the two new academies in Walsall have been based on Walsall Council's admission criteria.

Obs It concerns me that although the government want to give more opportunities to children from deprived areas only a limited number of local pupils can gain entry to the Walsall Academy.

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➤ **Can you tell us about the potential 14-19 Engineering Academy/Skills Centre?**

A Children from across Walsall and from other areas could apply for a place at the 14-19 Academy. There would be an admission round and pupils would apply for a place at the end of KS3. The admission arrangements would have to be such that pupils from neighbouring LAs were not disadvantaged by distance. Wolverhampton University, Walsall College and local employers are interested in becoming involved.

Obs I think it is important that local employers are given the chance to provide input. I sit on the Education Board, involved with the Chamber of Commerce, and chair the Walsall Business Partnership and I have not heard of it.

A The national curriculum would need to be followed, and if any pupils at the Academy decided that they did not wish to proceed with engineering based subjects, they would need to be in a position to move on to sixth form at another school.

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➤ **If a 14-19 Academy is opened at Sneyd, how will this affect Willenhall, Frank F Harrison and Pool Hayes?**

A We do not yet know what the impact would be on the three schools, but as the Academy would be open to pupils from across the borough and from neighbouring authorities it is possible that it would not have a huge impact on Walsall schools.

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➤ **How would it be funded?**

A The government would provide capital for buildings, and revenue funding.

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➤ **Frank F Harrison is an Engineering College, so if an Engineering Academy is set up just down the road, would this not have an impact on Frank F Harrison?**

A The possible impact on Frank F Harrison is being considered.

Obs Has the possibility of changing specialism been discussed with Frank F Harrison?

A This would have to be discussed with the school.

Obs I believe the Academy would create problems for pupils of Frank F Harrison in the future.

A The School Admissions Code only permits schools with a specialism to select pupils by aptitude for certain subjects. Pupils cannot be selecting by aptitude for engineering.

➤ **What would be the size of the Engineering Academy?**

A This would be dependent on finances and numbers of pupils available after year 9. Possibly in the region of 190.

➤ **How much of the timetable would be spent on engineering?**

A The new facility would have to follow the national curriculum – including Maths, Science and English in addition to subjects related to engineering. The DCSF are very keen on clean engineering and it is possible this would be included in the curriculum.

Obs What concerns me is that this potential 14-19 Academy is being driven by the government, Wolverhampton University and Walsall College. I do not think that this new Academy will provide useful skills for getting jobs in the local area. What about a Skills Centre?

A Pupils would remain on roll at their own schools and

spend a small amount of time at the facility each week to study specialised subjects that schools may not be able to offer. Some other local LAs already have skills centres in operation.

Obs What subjects would a Skills Centre offer?

A As an example, I know of one in another local authority which specialises in courses relating to the construction industry.

Obs The courses offered would need to be relevant to the needs of local employers.

Obs I do not think that education should stand still, but I also do not think that we should be guided on what is best for the local community by central government

A It would be a regional facility catering for the needs of pupils in Walsall.

Obs I am concerned about this. The best thing we can do is give people skills that are interchangeable.

A I would have liked to have access to vocational subjects even though I was an academic.

➤ **Have the proposals in this consultation been considered in light of the Willenhall regeneration scheme?**

A The Willenhall regeneration scheme is primarily housing led. Some areas that were used for industry could now be used for housing.

Obs What about the high tech corridor approach that would react to this type of shift. More able youngsters stand less chance of coming back to the West Midlands due to lack of jobs.

A There have been discussions around these issues.

➤ **Governors agreed that they would provide a collective response.**



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➤ **Would a response from the Chamber of Commerce help?**

A For this consultation we are asking for opinions about the 3 options, and just gaining views on the potential Skills Centre / 14-19 Engineering Academy.

The meeting was closed and governors were thanked for their attendance.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

Location:	Pool Hayes Community
Meeting with:	Parents Drop In Sessions
Date:	4 June 2009
Time:	6.30pm – 8.00pm

### Questions, Comments and Responses

#### Parents of Year 8 pupil

- **We are concerned about how the proposals for Sneyd would affect the 6<sup>th</sup> form at Pool Hayes School.**

A It was explained that only option B would have a significant impact on Pool Hayes and that if this option was taken forward the school would have a larger 6<sup>th</sup> form.

- **This would cause some problems because there is insufficient room for the pupils who are already attending the school and it would be difficult for them to accommodate additional pupils, at present there is also nowhere to put mobile classrooms on the school site.**

A We appreciate there would be difficulties, but an increase in the number of pupils would mean that the schools would have more money and would be able to employ more teachers and provide additional resources.

- **What arrangements would be made for pupils who currently attend Sneyd to travel to Pool Hayes.**

A If Sneyd closes pupils who meet distance and financial criteria could apply to Walsall Children's Services – Serco for a free bus pass.

## Parent of Year 7 pupil & Year 10 pupil

- **Option A seems to be the most advantageous to Pool Hayes as the pupils are distributed evenly.**

A Yes, but there is already a proposal to expand Pool Hayes under BSF.

- **Pool Hayes is always over subscribed anyway. Why have pupil numbers at Sneyd dropped?**

A Parents are not choosing to send their children to Sneyd. The school has been in special measures and after an initial improvement fell back into an Ofsted category last year. Sneyd is receiving less funding because of the drop in pupil numbers, but still has the buildings to maintain with less money to do so.

Obs I work at a school that was in special measures, so I understand the effect this can have on a school's reputation.

- **Would the school be expanded or just be porta cabins?**

A There would have to be porta cabins while work was carried out to increase the size of the building.

- **What will happen next?**

A Cabinet will meet in July to consider the responses to the consultation and will decide whether to take one of the options forward.

- **I am disappointed in the low numbers of parents who attended tonight and also the recent BSF meeting, will it be difficult to place the Sneyd pupils as all local schools are already full.**

A Under two of the options schools would be enlarged to accommodate pupils transferring from Sneyd.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Willenhall School Sports College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Student Council
<b>Date:</b>	9 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	2 pm

**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children's Services - Serco	Willenhall School Sports College	Others
Avril Walton	1 Teacher	
Susan Lupton	13 Students	
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also outlined the process of consultation.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

➤ **Question to Student Council – What do the Student Council do?**

A                    We act as a voice for all pupils.

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➤ **If option B was chosen who would choose which children went to each of the 3 schools.**

A In Year 7 we would offer 300 places at Willenhall as part of an admissions round. We would ask parents of Sneyd children transferring at end of their Key Stage which of the 3 schools was their preference. They could also apply to other schools.

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➤ **So you won't choose which children go where?**

A No, parents would have the opportunity to express a preference and where possible this would be offered to them.

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➤ **What would happen to the school building?**

A Under option B you would initially have to have some temporary accommodation on the school site but as part of the BSF scheme you would eventually get a new building large enough for all the pupils you have here.

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➤ **If Option C is chosen would Frank F Harrison get a new building?**

A Frank F Harrison is due to be rebuilt through the BSF scheme in any case, the building would just be bigger if option C were chosen. But the council would still like to retain the community facilities at the Sneyd site.

Obs There is some rivalry between pupils at Willenhall and Sneyd.

A There would be an integration programme with lots of mixing between the two schools such as joint trips, theatre productions, football teams etc prior to the transfer. It would only be 30 Year

10 pupils who would have been to Sneyd who would be transferring to Willenhall under option B, the admission number for Year 7 would be increased and the additional pupils would be starting at Willenhall as their secondary school. 300 pupils would be admitted instead of 270 as now.

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➤ **Wouldn't this create a risk of pupils who want Willenhall not getting a place?**

A All applications are assessed under over-subscription criteria, one of these is the distance from home address.

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➤ **Why was Frank F Harrison chosen under option C?**

A Frank F Harrison is a smaller school than Willenhall or Pool Hayes, so the new school would not be too big.

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➤ **Only option B involves us?**

A Yes that's right.

Obs We would gain from having new pupils and would be welcoming to the new pupils.

Obs Option C would be the best option.

Obs I still think that there would be a division between Sneyd and Willenhall pupils.

Obs With option B pupils will probably only pick Willenhall when they know people here and therefore there will not be any conflict between pupils.

Obs Behaviour might be a problem, as new pupils might give our school a bad reputation.

A Do you think behaviour might be a problem in a bigger school?

Obs Yes

Obs I do not think it would be an issue – we would just accept 30 more pupils, it would only be one more class.

A The total difference would gradually build up to 150.

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➤ **What would happen to our house system?**

A This would be a school decision, but I am sure it would be discussed with the Student Council.

Obs Option B evens the impact out and seems more fair.

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➤ **Can you tell us about the skills centre?**

A The government have asked if Walsall is interested in setting up an Engineering Academy. No decision has been made yet and we are looking into the feasibility of this idea to see if it is right for Walsall. If an academy was opened there would be an admissions round in Year 10 and all Year 9 pupils in Walsall and out of borough pupils would be able to apply. It is likely the curriculum would focus on 'clean engineering' to meet future needs whilst reducing the impact on the environment.

The Skills Centre would be different as pupils would remain on the roll of their secondary schools and would attend the Skills Centre on a part-time basis. The Skills

Centre would offer more specialist courses than individual schools can offer, some of which would be vocational courses. Specialist facilities would mean that there would be a broader curriculum would be on offer. During this consultation process, we are trying to get an idea of what people think about these potential facilities.

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➤ **Would all Year 9's transfer to the 14-19 Academy?**

- A Courses would continue at current secondary schools, and people who wanted to go to the Academy would apply for a place to transfer for KS 4. The 14-19 Academy would be for pupils from neighbouring authorities as well as Walsall.
- 

➤ **Would you still be able to study engineering subjects here?**

- A Your school could continue to offer engineering subjects.
- 

➤ **The Student Council voted on their preferred option:**

Option A – 0 votes  
Option B – 11 votes  
Option C – 2 votes

The pupils were encouraged to fill in their consultation response forms. Avril Walton closed the meeting and she and the teacher thanked the pupils for attending.





**Walsall Children's Services**

# Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Willenhall School Sports College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Staff
<b>Date:</b>	9 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	3 pm

**PRESENT:**

<b>Walsall Children's Services - Serco</b>	<b>Willenhall School Sports College</b>	<b>Others</b>
Avril Walton	Head Teacher	
Susan Lupton	47 Staff	
Kate Mann		
Primula Paul		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also outlined the process of consultation.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

- **In relation to the 14-19 Engineering Academy, we have engineering subjects here, would the new Academy have an impact on the subjects we offer?**

A            The Academy would have to deliver the national curriculum, and we understand there would be a focus on 'Clean Engineering'. The government approached Walsall about the possibility of a 14-19 academy and we are looking into the viability at the moment.

It would be a regional academy which would be open to pupils from Walsall and neighbouring authorities. There would be an admission round and all Year 9 students would be able to apply if they wished to do so for transfer in KS4. There are currently no plans to suggest changes to the curriculum of local schools as a result of the 14-19 Academy.

A Skills Centre could be opened as an alternative to a 14-19 academy. Skills Centre pupils would remain on roll at their secondary schools and would attend on a part time basis. The Skills Centre would be able to offer a broader curriculum with some specialist facilities.

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➤ **Is the consultation just on the 3 options or are the Skills Centre and 14-19 Academy options as well?**

A We are consulting on the 3 options and also seeking people's opinions on a 14-19 Academy and Skills Centre at the present time.

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➤ **Willenhall has a very successful young apprenticeship course running – would this be able to continue?**

A It would be at least a couple of years before a 14-19 Academy was open and decisions on changes to curriculum would be up to local schools.

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➤ **A 14-19 Academy will impact on our KS4 numbers, and would be a cause for concern whereas a skills centre would benefit more youngsters providing it was of a high quality.**

Obs KS3 pupils often prefer to stay at their existing school rather than apply to college for KS4 and it could well be similar with a 14 -19 academy. However the Skills Centre would be different because pupils would not have to transfer from their current school.

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➤ **Why are Sneyd's numbers dropping so much, would it not be better to spread the pupils around the borough?**

A            I understand that Sneyd was a popular school not that long ago. However, they went into special measures and although they were able to get out of that category they could not sustain the progress and are now under notice to improve. Pupil numbers have dropped because parents are not expressing a preference for Sneyd when they make their application for Year 7 places.

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➤ **Has there been any support for Sneyd?**

A            We have put a massive amount of support into Sneyd. Pool Hayes shared sixth form teaching with Sneyd but has now decided to withdraw from the arrangement. Unfortunately there are not enough pupils to make the school viable, which results in the budget going down. Parents are not choosing to send their children to Sneyd and we have to respond to parental preference.

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➤ **If our school was expanded to take pupils transferring from Sneyd what would happen if we could not fill the additional places?**

A            There is a need for some surplus capacity to allow for the movement of children between schools mid year, and for pupils moving into Walsall.

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➤ **We will leave ourselves vulnerable if we take more challenging pupils.**

A All local authorities are required to have a Fair Access Protocol in place. Walsall is currently consulting on a revised protocol which should be in place from 1 September 2009. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure that pupils get a school place without delay, and that schools with surplus capacity are not required to admit a disproportionate number of challenging pupils.

Obs St Thomas More has recently changed their admission number.

A After lengthy discussions with the diocese the admission number was increased, as it was artificially low. We have now agreed a new number which accurately reflects the amount of space in the building.

Obs If St Thomas More is full can they admit any further children?

A All parents have the right of appeal if a place is refused and additional pupils could be placed at the school under the Fair Access Protocol.

➤ **Darlaston has an admission number of 245, there will be a significant number of surplus places in the west of Walsall. An Academy will become more popular and will take pupils from other schools.**

A Willenhall is already a popular school, so there would be a element of competition if the new Academy is also popular. In the future the Willenhall regeneration programme is likely to provide 3,000 homes, which would generate 90 pupils per year group across Walsall depending on the housing mix. Partnership for Schools will not allow us to include these pupils in our projections for BSF. With these pupils taken into account we feel we will have an appropriate number of school places in Walsall.

Obs One of the reasons for problems is the Walsall Academy. It is in the middle of Sneyd and Brownhills, and both have had problems will falling pupil numbers.

- **I cannot see how mobile classrooms can be a viable option. Our main building has narrow corridors. Also the numbers of staff would need to be increased, this seems difficult in the short term and the budget increase would not be that much more.**

A Additional pupils would bring additional funding with them.

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- **Would the temporary accommodation have to be paid for by the school?**

A No. This would be funded by the LA.

Avril Walton closed the meeting and she and the Headteacher thanked the staff for attending.



Walsall Children's Services

## Consultation Meeting Notes

<b>Location:</b>	Willenhall School Sports College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Governors
<b>Date:</b>	9 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	4pm

**PRESENT:**

Walsall Children's Services - Serco	Darlaston Community Science College	Others
Avril Walton	8 Governors	
Susan Lupton	Headteacher	
Kate Mann		
David Whitehouse		

The meeting began with a presentation by Avril Walton who also outlined the process of consultation.

### Questions, Comments and Responses

➤ **If Option B was chosen what support would the Headteacher get with accommodating the additional pupils?**

A We cannot provide support within the school, but can provide advice and guidance. We would have a role in supporting Headteachers at all of the schools on the integration of school communities prior to transfer. Children transferring bring funding with them, but there would not be any kind of enhanced budget.

---

➤ **We would be trying to accommodate a larger number of pupils than usual, but we do not really want temporary accommodation.**

- A Temporary accommodation would be required on a short term basis until a new building big enough for all pupils could be delivered through BSF.
- Obs We are always looking for what is best for pupils, and temporary accommodation is not it.
- Obs There communal space would be insufficient to accommodate the additional pupils, there would be particular problems in the dining room.
- Obs I have more concerns about the impact inside the building, we already have a split lunch and pupils only get 30 minutes break time, and communal gatherings would be difficult. This could mean changes in the school day.
- Obs Could there not be health and safety concerns as well, circulation in the building is already bad.

➤ **Would the budget for the rebuild reflect the increase in size?**

- A Yes, funding is pupil numbers lead.

➤ **How long would the mobiles be here for?**

- A They would be needed until the completion of the BSF scheme.

➤ **We are concerned about the proposal to admit 30 additional pupils into year 10. We are a national challenge school and are very vulnerable if we do not get sustained improvement in numbers of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C GCSE grades. The impact of another 30 children on exam results could be a real problem.**

- Obs Especially when they are coming from a failing school.
- Obs And these children will be taking their GCSEs in the same year that the Black Country Challenge make their

decision on the future of Willenhall.

A Sneyd achieved 19% 5 A\*-C GCSE grades last year.

Obs So the same thing could happen to us as is now happening to Sneyd. I would therefore not recommend this option to the governing body.

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➤ **The Black Country challenge will not take the arrival of 30 more pupils from a failing school into account.**

Obs So value added would not mean anything in relation to these year 10 pupils

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➤ **Who has the final say on which option is chosen?**

A The elected members who make up the council's cabinet. Your views will be reported and taken account of when a decision is made. Pupils in the other 3 schools are just as important as those at Sneyd.

Obs This is a national challenge school which could potentially lose the senior management team if results are not improved and we do not want to go through the same experience that Sneyd has.

Obs Taking 30 pupils in Year 7 is very different from taking pupils in Year 10.

---

➤ **Will the community facilities at Sneyd be closed?**

A Elected members have said they want community facilities to be retained at Sneyd. A 14-19 Academy or Skills Centre could also be located on the site.

Obs A 14-19 Engineering Academy would impact on our engineering apprenticeships and our number on roll at KS4. Given the state of engineering in this area, how



many pupils would actually be interested?

- A This will be a regional facility, so we would be looking at a large catchment area, pupils from out of borough would be eligible to apply for admission as well as Walsall pupils.
- 

➤ **How many pupils would there be at the Academy?**

- A There would be 4 year groups and numbers would gradually build up, we are currently looking at how many pupils the Academy would need to be viable. None of the places could be offered on the basis of students having an aptitude for an engineering specialism.
- 

➤ **How would pupils get there?**

- A In a variety of ways. It is possible that the Academy would put on buses, pupils could use public transport, walk, or cycle to school. This would be a 14-19 facility and a regional academy so some pupils would be travelling from out of borough. We have been asked by the government to look into this and we need to see what advantages there would be for Walsall pupils.
- 

➤ **You would be sending pupils to an Engineering Academy who do not really want to go.**

- A We would not be sending them. There would be an admission round and year 9 pupils from within Walsall and outside of the borough could apply for place if they wished to do so.

- Obs We would need to look at the best option for Walsall

schools and its pupils.

- Obs From our point of view, Option C would be preferred.
- Obs Option C would keep the school community together and Frank F Harrison is a currently a smaller school than Willenhall.
- Obs Frank F Harrison was not a popular school in the past.
- Obs The prospect of temporary accommodation on our site is appalling.
- Obs Admitting additional Year 7 pupils would be ok, but pupils transferring at Year 10 would place us in a very difficult situation.
- Obs National Challenge will just look at results which is outrageous.
- Obs The type of parent who would encourage pupils to apply for a 14-19 Academy would be the supportive parent whose child would be encouraged to work hard at school, and this would be bad news for Willenhall as we would be losing pupils who would otherwise contribute towards the percentage achieving 5 A\*-C grades.

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➤ **Can we say on the consultation forms, please go away and look at other options?**

- A We cannot make decision to consult on other options, but Cabinet could choose to do so.

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➤ **Can you tell us about a Skills Centre?**

- A The idea of a Skills Centre is that pupils would remain on roll at their secondary school and would attend the centre on a part-time basis. A Skills Centre would enable pupils

to access curriculum areas that could not be delivered within their own schools. The Centre could have specialist staff and facilities, and would compliment what schools are doing. The results that pupils achieved at the Skills Centre would be counted along with their school's results.

Obs This could be very positive for the school.

A The larger vision for the borough is to have 3-4 skills centres to support the 14-19 curriculum.

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➤ **Would there be a role in Skills Centres for training providers?**

A Yes, there could be.

Obs This could be really positive as we would not want to see training providers shut out of the Skills Centre.

A If schools were in control of the governance of skills centres it would be up to them to make this decision.

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➤ **Whose idea was a 14-19 Academy?**

A Lord Kenneth Baker (previous Secretary of State for Education) and Lord Dearing (who led on 14-19 education).

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➤ **Are there any 14 -19 engineering academies yet?**

A There is already a JCB Academy, and another engineering academy is opening in Birmingham soon.

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➤ **Has anyone looked at the needs of the area?**

A            There have been discussions with the Chamber of Commerce and employers.

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➤ **Is the proposition to close Sneyd final? Could it be reopened when the proposed 3,000 homes are built in Willenhall?**

A            We would have to provide school places for children generated by new builds. At the moment we cannot create school places for children who might come in. Depending on the housing mix, 3,000 new homes would generate approximately 90 children in each year group, but houses would not be occupied immediately by families with children and we do not yet know what the housing mix would be, apartments would generate half the number of pupils per year group.

It would probably be at least 4 years before any new housing development was built. We have been looking at projections up to 2018/19, and we have been told that we cannot include these 3,000 houses into our projections. We can only include projected numbers from housing developments for which planning consent has been given. We cannot keep Sneyd open on the basis that these children might appear at some point in the future. Pupil numbers have fallen considerably, and there is also the issue of falling standards.

---

➤ **Why can you not stop admission to Year 7 when it is inevitable that the school is closing?**

A            It is not inevitable that the school will close. It is up to the elected members to make their decision and there is a statutory process which has to be followed.

Obs        Most of the children going to Sneyd in September will be

going there because it's their nearest school.

- A (Outlined the consultation process) We are consulting on 3 options that cabinet approved for consultation. Cabinet will not make any final decision until November and that is why we cannot refuse Year 7 places in September.
- 

➤ **If Willenhall has to take 30 extra children, could governors refuse to have them?**

- A It would depend on who the admission authority was at the time.

The meeting was closed and Avril Walton thanked the governors for attending.



**Walsall Council**

**serco**

**Walsall Children's Services**

## **Consultation Meeting Notes**

<b>Location:</b>	Willenhall School Sports College
<b>Meeting with:</b>	Parents Drop In Sessions
<b>Date:</b>	9 June 2009
<b>Time:</b>	5.30pm – 6.30pm

### **Questions, Comments and Responses**

**No parents attended this drop in session.**

## Views of Persons Consulted: Initial Consultation

### Consultation on three options

The consultation on three options for the future of Sneyd commenced on 8 May 2009 and ended on 19 June 2009.

A consultation document which set out the details of the three options which all included the closure of Sneyd and, in varying ways, the enlargement of Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall, was issued to parents, staff, governors and members of the student council at the four schools. It was also sent to the parents of all children who have been offered a Year 7 place for September 2009 at these schools. The document was also circulated to all Walsall schools, other stakeholders and statutory consultees and was made available to the public through local libraries and the schools; it was also posted on the Walsall Children's Services – Serco website. In total, over 6,000 copies of the consultation document were issued.

Twelve consultation meetings at which representatives of Walsall Children's Services – Serco gave a presentation and responded to questions were held at the schools. Seven drop-in sessions at a variety of times and venues were held for parents in order to give as many parents as possible the opportunity for a one-to-one discussion regarding the options and implications for their children.

Details of attendance at the meetings and drop-in sessions are provided in Table 1 below. Borough representatives of the professional associations and unions were invited to the staff meetings but attendance was limited to the GMB and school representatives. Attendance at the drop-in sessions for parents was particularly disappointing especially as all parents had been sent a letter inviting them to these events together with a copy of the consultation document which also included details; schools had also alerted parents.

Table 1 Attendance at consultation meetings and drop-in sessions

School	School Council	Staff	Parents	Governors
Sneyd	12 Headteacher	70 Headteacher	39 and 5 pupils	15 Headteacher
Frank F Harrison	12 pupils 1 teacher	86 staff Headteacher	2 and 1 pupil	4 governors Headteacher
Pool Hayes	9 students 1 teacher	39 staff Headteacher	3	9 governors Headteacher
Willenhall	13 students 1 teacher	47 staff Headteacher	0	8 governors Headteacher

### Issues raised at Consultation Meetings and Drop-in Sessions

#### Sneyd

##### School Council

Although the meeting had been arranged with the school, officers met with a group of students assembled by the headteacher. Issues raised by the students included the relative performance of the school compared to the averages for Walsall, transition arrangements and implications for choosing options, the potential for investment in the Sneyd building, distance

to other schools, the relative popularity of schools, and the possibility of problems arising between pupils from Sneyd and those from other local schools. More information was provided about how the proposed 14-19 Engineering Academy might operate and how it could fit in to the pattern of provision in the local area.

### Staff

Issues raised at the staff meeting included discussions held with DCSF officials, pupil numbers and school places, the implications of the planned housing developments in Willenhall, the Building Schools for the Future Programme, the movement of some pupils to other schools, and standards at the school. The characteristics of and differences between a 14-19 Engineering Academy and a Skills Centre were also considered; there was some concern that these would cater for PRU pupils rather than provide a broader range of opportunities for the full ability range. Staff were concerned about their continued employment, opportunities for other jobs, possible TUPE rights, 'golden handcuffs', redundancy and access to pensions. Questions were also asked about the consultation responses and comments which might be made regarding the school's preference for an 11-19 academy. The issue of possible conflict between pupils from Sneyd and those at other local schools was also raised.

### Governors

The Chair of Governors referred to the matter being considered that evening by the Council and the possibility of the process being halted as they felt that an 11-19 academy could solve the school's problems. The governors considered that if the school became an academy it would become more popular and fill, and mentioned that the governors had been approached by a potential sponsor. The implementation of the BSF programme in Walsall was also considered. A suggestion was made that the number of places at other local, more popular schools could be reduced in order to ensure that pupil numbers increased at Sneyd. The possible benefits and implications of possibly establishing a 14-19 Engineering Academy or a Skills Centre were also considered. Strong concern was expressed about the problems that would be associated with Sneyd pupils transferring to Frank F Harrison. It was mentioned that the number of children in the locality attending schools across the border might increase if Sneyd is closed (historically, many children in the area have attended schools in Staffordshire and Wolverhampton; such movements are common close to borders and in other parts of the borough many pupils from other areas cross the border to attend Walsall schools). The governors were strongly in favour of an 11-19 academy and asked about how this could be reflected in consultation responses and what account would be taken of such comments.

### Parents

Although all parents of current pupils and of those offered a place for September 2009 had been invited to the drop in sessions, only a very small number of attended. In order to maximise attendance, the sessions were held at a number of different venues (in addition to Sneyd School) and times in order to make it as convenient as possible for parents to attend. Issues raised by parents at the drop in sessions focused on the reasons for the consultation on the future of the school and the implications of the three options for their own children. Parents asked about the availability of places at other schools than those detailed in the three options and information was given about the appeals process where relevant. Questions were asked about standards at the school and the outcomes of Ofsted inspections over the last few years and information relating to these was provided. Parents asked about transition arrangements to other schools, how these would work to ensure that disruption for pupils was minimised, and how places would be allocated at other schools. Some concerns were raised about possible relationships between Sneyd pupils and those at Frank F Harrison if the pupils were brought together as one school community. The future use of the Sneyd building and site were raised. The likely timescale for the decision-making process was outlined to parents and the proposed 14-19 Engineering Academy and Skills Centre were discussed.



## **Frank F Harrison**

### School Council

The School Council supported option C, where all pupils at Sneyd would transfer to the roll at Frank F Harrison, because pupils from the same housing estates attend both schools, it would help the education of pupils at Sneyd, and would be cost effective. The differences between options B and C with respect to Frank F Harrison were discussed, including accommodation, staffing and pupils. The opportunity for integration activities for the two groups of pupils, including joint activities etc was considered. The possibility of rivalries between the two schools was mentioned but it was considered that these may end if there was only one school. With regard to option C, the possible arrangements for the use of the two sites and buildings were discussed. Questions were asked about the consultation process in relation to the other schools named in option B. There was support for a Skills Centre

### Staff

Staff asked about the implications of the options for the planned new build at Frank F Harrison. Other matters raised included possible arrangements for the use of both sites (option C), staffing implications, arrangements for the managed transfer process that would be needed with option B, the future of the Sneyd community association and also the possible impact that either an Engineering Academy or a Skills Centre would have on the school's specialist status.

### Governors

Matters raised included reasons for the decline in pupil numbers at Sneyd, pupils attending out-of-borough schools, and timescales for secondary admissions applications for 2010. The differences between an Engineering Academy and a Skills Centre and their possible implications for Frank F Harrison were considered. The accommodation aspects of options B and C were discussed, together with how both sites could be used (option C) and traffic issues. Governors also raised the opportunity to broaden the sixth form curriculum at Frank F Harrison, staff turnover levels at Sneyd, and the community facilities on the Sneyd site. There was some discussion about bringing together the pupils from Sneyd and Frank F Harrison and how this could be done to give a smooth transition.

### Parents

Matters raised included the possible impact of the options on Frank F Harrison, whether younger siblings of children attending the school would be able to get a place in future years, school accommodation and the consultation process.

## **Pool Hayes**

### School Council

The School Council reported that their preferred option was A, followed by option C; option B (which includes additional pupils at Pool Hayes) was the least preferred option because of the proposed enlargement of the school, the narrow corridors and small classrooms, lunchtime arrangements, concerns about the control of pupils, and an increase in the volume of traffic dropping pupils off at the front gates. Pupils were particularly concerned that the highly valued pupil/teacher relationships would be adversely affected were there to be an increase in pupil numbers. Concern was also expressed about the impact on resources. Issues raised included the impact that the loss of Sneyd staff has had on joint sixth form provision and the measures that would be put in place to ensure teaching standards do not suffer. The 2009/10 academic year will be the final year of these arrangements and will only involve Year 13 pupils. Given the existence of a number of engineering colleges in the local area, pupils asked whether the specialism of the proposed 14-19 academy could be performing arts.

### Staff

Issues raised included reasons for the fall in standards at Sneyd, the use of temporary accommodation at Walsall schools and the undesirability of this, the future possible uses of the Sneyd site. Observations were made that an increase in the number of pupils on the school site would be challenging especially in view of the constraints of the site for the location of temporary accommodation and the pressures associated with the current number of pupils.

### Governors

The governors commented that they did not consider option B to be viable because there is insufficient space on the site for the temporary accommodation that would be required. Concern was also expressed about possible empty places if pupil numbers fell and about possibly having to admit challenging pupils. The issue of whether the admission arrangements at the Walsall Academy could be changed to enable more local children to be admitted was raised. Matters raised in connection with the 14-18 Engineering Academy included the possible impact on the Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall schools, the funding arrangements, its appropriateness for the local area, and the curriculum offer. The governors agreed that they would send a collective written response to the consultation proposals.

### Parents

The drop-in session was attended by three parents and issues raised related to the effect that the proposed closure of Sneyd would have on the sixth form arrangements operated by Sneyd and Pool Hayes, reasons for the fall in numbers at Sneyd, accommodation issues and the decision-making process..

### **Willenhall**

#### School Council

Students asked the arrangements for transferring pupils from Sneyd to Willenhall and the other two schools in option B and the implications for their school building and the other schools. Discussion focused on how additional pupils could be integrated into the school in order to minimise any difficulties. There were two views on the most appropriate of the three options but the majority supported option B. The opportunities afforded by a 14-19 Engineering Academy and a Skills Centre were also discussed.

### Staff

The possible impact of a 14-19 Engineering Academy on the subjects offered at Willenhall was raised and concern was expressed about the implications for the school's young apprenticeship course. Staff felt that the Engineering Academy would impact on Key Stage 4 numbers at Willenhall whereas a Skills Centre would benefit more pupils. Questions were asked about why pupil numbers at Sneyd had fallen, and whether the local authority could do anything to reverse this, and also the support that had been given to the school. Concern was expressed that some of the additional places proposed at Willenhall might not be filled and that the school would be expected to take more challenging pupils. The possible impact of the proposed Darlaston Academy on admissions to schools in the area was discussed. Staff were concerned about the impact of additional pupils on the existing building especially with regard to circulation and felt that temporary classrooms would not be a viable option. There was also concern that the additional revenue funding the school would receive would not be sufficient to cover the costs associated with educating the additional pupils.

### Governors

Governors enquired about the availability of additional support and funding to support the proposed increase in pupil numbers. The undesirability of temporary accommodation was raised and governors were concerned about possible health and safety implications as a result of an increase in the number of pupils using the existing building and felt that this could lead to changes in the school day. Concern was expressed about the effect that admitting

additional pupils to Year 10 would have on standards, given that Willenhall is a National Challenge school. The governors stated that option C was their preferred option as it would keep the Sneyd school community together; there was considerable concern about the prospect of admitting additional pupils to Willenhall and it was felt that the transfer in of pupils in Year 10 would place the school in a very difficult situation. Governors were concerned about the impact that a 14-19 Engineering Academy would have on the school's engineering apprenticeships and other courses but were of the view that a Skills Centre could be very positive for the school. The issue of planned residential developments as part of the regeneration of Willenhall was also discussed.

Parents

No parents attended the drop-in session.

**Other**

Representatives of Walsall Children's Services – Serco also attended two meetings with local ward councillors.

The views given at these meetings are provided in Appendix B where the questions raised and observations made are detailed together with the responses given.

**Written Consultation Responses**

Over 6,000 copies of the consultation document, which included a response form, were issued. In total, 781 response forms have been received and a breakdown by schools is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Number of consultation response forms received from the schools

School	School Council / pupils	Staff	Parents	Governors	Total
Sneyd	475	49	111	4	639
Frank F Harrison	1	2	2	0	5
Pool Hayes	7	28	14	6	55
Willenhall	12	9	2	4	27

A total of 781 response forms were returned, with some respondents indicating that they were responding in two capacities eg as parents and governors, or as staff and governors. Not all respondents completed all sections in the response form. Only 651 of the respondents indicated that they had seen the consultation pack in which the response form was provided. Of those responding, 350 found the consultation document helpful; almost all of those who did not were part of the Sneyd school community. Although 451 of the respondents claimed to have attended one of the meetings or drop-in sessions held as part of this consultation, analysis has shown that this was not always the case. At Sneyd, for example, 257 pupils stated that they had attended such an event but only 12 were present at the meeting with the School Council and only a very small number of pupils attended the drop-in sessions with their parents. It may be the case that some respondents had attended meetings held by the School's Action Group and though these were part of the Council's consultation.

Consultees were asked to indicate their view of the three options – A, B and C – by ranking them. The vast majority of respondents (593) from the Sneyd School community did not rank

the options because their preferred option, an 11-19 academy, was not included as it had not been agreed as a consultation option by Cabinet.

Details of the preferences for the three options are provided in Table3 below.

Table 3: Preferences for the options

School	Option A				Option B				Option C			
	1	2	3	NR	1	2	3	NR	1	2	3	NR
Sneyd	13	8	25	593	13	15	19	593	11	5	30	593
Frank F Harrison	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	2
Pool Hayes	22	6	0	27	0	3	21	31	8	15	3	29
Willenhall	2	9	6	8	8	1	8	8	14	7	3	1
Other	0	0	1	64	0	0	1	64	0	0	1	64
Not specified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	19	28	700	16	17	44	704	28	25	30	698

Notes

Consultees were asked to rank the options from 1 to 3 with a score of 1 for their most preferred option and 3 for their least preferred option.

Total numbers differ to the number of responses received as some respondents indicated that they were, for example, a parent and a governor.

NR: options not ranked.

Table 3 above shows that although only a small number of respondents ranked the preferences, option A was the preferred option of those who did so.

In addition, other written responses were received from the governing bodies of Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall Schools, the headteacher of Frank F Harrison, a parent and the headteacher of a secondary school.

Formal responses from Governing Bodies

A letter sent on behalf of the governors of Frank F Harrison states that no one option is favoured and that ‘the governors take their wider responsibility to the community very seriously and, although they would not support any proposal that they thought would be disadvantageous to the college, they are willing to work with all concerned to find a solution to the problem; their main driver in all of this would be the need to offer the best possible opportunities for all members of both communities now and in the long term future’. A letter from the headteacher indicated his support for option C as the best way forward.

The Chair of Governors at Pool Hayes wrote that of the options consulted on, only option A would be acceptable to the governing body, as any increase in the number of places at the school would create such pressure that it would impact on health and safety and standards. Health and safety concerns relating to classrooms, changing rooms, toilets, dining facilities, availability of play areas (the school has detached playing fields and there was concern about space for temporary classrooms) and circulation (narrow corridors and staircases) were detailed. Governors were also concerned that changes to the school population may put at risk their ability to remove the school from the National Challenge and Persistent Absence categories the school is currently in. It was also considered by governors that any increase in numbers had the potential to destabilise the culture and ethos of the school, in particular staff-student relationships which are seen by both groups and parents as a positive feature of the school. There was support for the possible creation of additional places at the school as part of the rebuild of the school through the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

A letter from the governors of Willenhall states that they oppose both options A and B and that their preferred option is C. The governors expressed concerns about the impact that additional students might have on GCSE standards at the school and efforts to get results above the National Challenge threshold, and the implications of this for the future of Willenhall. Governors were also concerned about possible health and safety implications given the cramped nature of the school accommodation. As the school is not part of immediate plans for Building Schools for the Future, governors stated that they 'cannot agree to an increase in numbers in what is already a very cramped environment'. The governors mentioned that in addition to temporary classrooms, additional dining facilities, changing rooms and specialist areas (including indoor PE facilities) would be needed because of existing pressures. Additional staff would also be required and there was concern that the funding which would follow the children would not cover the costs and would be to the detriment of the school and existing students. The governors also stated that they were not in favour of establishing a 14-19 Engineering Academy but felt that a Skills Centre would provide a much needed resource for all local students to enjoy high quality vocational experiences to support the 14-19 curriculum.

### Petitions

Four separate petitions were received:

- a) a petition urging both Walsall council and the DCSF to include the 11-19 academy option in their consultation exercise has 309 signatures;
- b) a petition demanding an 11-19 academy was signed by 315 people;
- c) a petition asking people not to vote for either of the two closure options but to keep the school open was signed by 34 people; and
- d) a petition to keep the community facilities at Sneyd open was signed by 22 users of the facilities.

It is likely that some petitioners signed more than one of these various forms.

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**Views of Persons Consulted: Further Consultation**

**Consultation on one option**

The short consultation on the single option for the future of Sneyd commenced on 14 September and ended on 2 October 2009. This consultation was undertaken through the issue of a consultation document and response form; no consultation meetings were held.

A consultation document which set out the details of this option was issued to parents, staff, governors and members of the student council at Sneyd. The document was also sent to parents, staff, governors and members of the student council at schools where it is expected that pupils from Sneyd would take up a significant number of available places; these schools are: Alumwell, Blue Coat CE, Brownhills, Grace Academy Darlaston and Joseph Leckie. A limited number of places is available at more local schools. The consultation document was also sent to the parents of all Year 6 children at primary schools in the local area and from which pupils have transferred to Sneyd in September 2009. The document was also circulated to all Walsall schools, other stakeholders and statutory consultees and was made available to the public through local libraries and the schools; it was also posted on the Walsall Children’s Services – Serco website. In total, over 7,000 copies of the consultation document were issued.

**Written Consultation Responses**

Although over 7,000 copies of the consultation document, which included a response form, were issued, only 30 response forms were returned and one email was received. This is a disappointing level of response especially in view of the matter under consideration and the number of consultation documents issued. One spoilt response form was received. Details of those participating in the consultation are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Number of consultation responses received

School	School Council / pupils	Staff	Parents	Governors	Total
Sneyd	2	1	11 (inc email)	1 (also staff)	15
Other secondary schools	0	1	2	1	4
Primary schools	10	1	0	1	12
Other	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>

A total of 15 responses were received from members of the Sneyd school community. Respondee stated their preference for the school to remain open and expressed concerns about the possible impact of transition arrangements on pupils who would need to continue their education at other schools. Concern was also raised about the availability of places at other schools in the locality during the transition period and the likelihood of pupils in the immediate area attending pupils in neighbouring authorities. There was some acceptance that the school had underachieved in recent years. The need to make appropriate arrangements for the current Year 9 pupils as soon as possible after a final decision being made was emphasised.

Responses from other school communities recognised the seriousness of the matter and the reasons why the proposed closure is considered necessary. Questions were raised about how pupil places would be allocated and the possible impact of additional pupils at receiving schools.

A primary school not in the locality of Sneyd had used the consultation as an exercise in citizenship.

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**Walsall Children's Services**

## **THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE**

### **CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

**The options under consideration also affect the following schools at  
which significant enlargement is proposed:**

**Frank F Harrison Engineering College  
Pool Hayes Arts and Community School  
Willenhall School Sports College.**

**Consideration is also being given to the establishment of a  
14-19 Engineering Academy and the possible establishment of a  
Skills Centre.**



## THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

### INTRODUCTION

Walsall Children's Services – Serco is undertaking public consultation on behalf of Walsall Council on the future of Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College, and the proposed enlargement of other schools in the local area. The schools at which enlargement is being considered are: Frank F Harrison Engineering College, Pool Hayes Arts and Community School and Willenhall School Sports College.

The proposals set out in each of the options are all linked and decisions regarding these will all be taken at the same time. The consultation period of six weeks will last until 19 June 2009. No decisions will be taken by Walsall Council until 18 July 2009, following full consideration of consultation responses.

In addition, consideration is being given to the establishment of a 14-19 Engineering Academy and also the possible establishment of a Skills Centre in the local area. Views are being sought with regard to these proposals.

### SNEYD COMMUNITY – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College provides secondary education for pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 years; the school has specialist status for maths and computing.

### WHY IS THE FUTURE OF SNEYD UNDER CONSIDERATION?

The future of the school is under consideration as a result of a sustained and significant fall in the number of pupils on roll at the school and also because of the challenges the school continues to face in its efforts to raise standards. These factors have resulted in the school becoming educationally and financially unviable.

**Pupil numbers** In January 2009, there were 893 pupils on roll at Sneyd; 99 of these pupils were in the sixth form. The number of places in each year group is 250 but the number of pupils admitted to Year 7 has fallen considerably over the last five years. In Jan 2009, there were only 110 pupils in Year 7, approximately half the number (226) in Year 11. As a result of the fall in admissions, 34% of places at the school are empty / surplus. Most of the funding a school receives is based on the number of pupils on roll and a reduction in pupil numbers affects the financial viability of a school.

**Standards** Although Sneyd has been working to improve educational standards in the school for a number of years with additional support from the local authority and the Black Country Challenge, standards remain inadequate. The school was in special measures between January 2005 and November 2006. There was a further inspection by Ofsted in November 2008 when the school was judged to require significant improvement and was given a Notice to Improve. Standards are significantly lower than at similar schools. The 2008 Key Stage 4

results were disappointing and show a downward trend over the last two years. At 19% 5+A\*-C (including English and maths) the school is in the bottom 9% of all secondary schools in the country. Its CVA, which measures the progress made by pupils at the school is, at 961, one of the lowest (bottom 1%) in the country. The school is identified as a National Challenge School and is required to make rapid improvement to secure 30%+ 5+A\* - C (including English and maths) GCSEs over the next two years. Early indications for 2009 do not suggest improvement will be rapid; it remains unlikely that the school will secure 30% in 2011.

## WHAT ARE THE PROPOSALS?

In October 2008, Cabinet asked the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel to explore in detail all the options for the future of Sneyd. A Working Group was set up to undertake this work and the Panel subsequently recommended that Cabinet pursue a solution that ensures the continuation of education on the site of Sneyd Community School and that the solution must be financially viable, take account of its impact on all schools in the area, and meet the needs of the local community.

Cabinet has now approved three options - A, B, and C - for consultation and these are detailed below. These options all allow for the continuation of education provision on the Sneyd site in the form of a 14-19 Engineering Academy or a Skills Centre.

## OPTION A

**Current education provision at Sneyd ceases on 31 August 2012. No pupils would be admitted to Year 7 or the sixth form in September 2010 and subsequent years. Pupils would transfer on a year on year basis to places at other schools in the borough.**

Pupils who start Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 would complete their key stage at Sneyd. All pupils currently in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would also complete their key stage at Sneyd. There would be no admissions to Year 7 or to the sixth form in September 2010 and following years. Details of the phased implementation of this option are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Phased transfer arrangements

Year Group in 2009/10 school year	Transfer to alternative school
Y7 (2009 admission)	Sept 2012
Y8	Sept 2011
Y9	Sept 2010
Y10	Sept 2011 (Post 16)
Y11	Sept 2010 (Post 16)
Y12	Leave August 2011; alternative places available in Sept 2010 as appropriate
Y13	Leave August 2010

This would mean that the year groups on roll at Sneyd in the three school years prior to closure would be as shown in Table 2 below. In the 2009/10 school year, all year groups would operate. In 2010/11, the school population would comprise pupils in Year 8, Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13.

In the 2011/12 school year, there would only be pupils in Year 9. During this transition period the local authority will work with the Black Country Challenge to provide support to the school.

Table 2 Proposed phased implementation arrangements

School Year		
2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Y7	Y8	Y9
Y8	Y9	Y10 At alternative schools
Y9	Y10 At alternative schools	Y11 At alternative schools
Y10	Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools
Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools	Left school or Y13 at alternative schools
Y12	Y13	Left school Aug 2011
Y13	Left school Aug 2010	

Shaded boxes show the year groups on the Sneyd site.

There would be sufficient places available at other schools to accommodate transferring pupils from Sneyd. Details of the estimated availability of places at alternative schools are provided in Appendix 1.

Details of the advantages and disadvantages associated with this option are provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Option A advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would provide a realistic timescale</li> <li>• Enables pupils to access places at higher achieving schools</li> <li>• Availability of places would enable pupils to transfer in groups</li> <li>• Minimises disruption for pupils</li> <li>• Pupils would complete their key stage at Sneyd</li> <li>• Receiving schools have time to plan for additional pupils from 2010</li> <li>• Temporary accommodation would not be required</li> <li>• Additional posts would be available at the receiving schools, creating opportunities for Sneyd staff</li> <li>• 14 -19 proposal ensures the continuity of education provision on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• Pupils from Sneyd would have access to a broader range of curriculum opportunities at the receiving schools</li> <li>• Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be secured through this option along side the proposed 14 – 19 provision</li> <li>• Additional places would be provided at</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving schools would receive a large number of additional pupils</li> <li>• With the rapid decline in pupil numbers at Sneyd, the Schools Funding Formula is unlikely to be sufficient to fund the running of Sneyd especially in 2011/12 when there would only be pupils in Year 9</li> <li>• Challenge of meeting Year 9 entitlement to a broad balanced curriculum in 2011/12</li> <li>• Staff retention issues at Sneyd over the period to closure</li> </ul>

Pool Hayes as part of the implementation of the secondary strategy.	
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**OPTION B**

Current education provision at Sneyd ceases on 31 August 2012 and significant enlargement of Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall from 1 September 2010.

No pupils would be admitted to Sneyd in September 2010, pupils would transfer on a phased basis to other schools, and the school would close on 31 August 2012. Additional places would be provided at Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall from September 2010.

Pupils who start Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 would complete their key stage at Sneyd. All pupils currently in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would complete their key stage at Sneyd. There would be no admissions to Year 7 or to the sixth form in 2010 and following years. Details of the phased implementation of this option are provided in Table 4.

Table 4 Phased transfer arrangements

Year Group in 2009/10 school year	Transfer to alternative school
Y7 (2009 admission)	Sept 2012
Y8	Sept 2011
Y9	Sept 2010
Y10	Sept 2011 (Post 16)
Y11	Sept 2010 (Post 16)
Y12	Leave August 2011; alternative places available in Sept 2010 as appropriate
Y13	Leave August 2010

This would mean that the year groups on roll at Sneyd in the three school years prior to closure would be as shown in Table 5 below. In the 2009/10 school year all year groups would operate. In 2010/11, the school population would comprise pupils in Year 8, Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13. In the 2011/12 school year, there would only be pupils in Year 9.

Table 5 Proposed phased implementation arrangements

School Year		
2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Y7	Y8	Y9
Y8	Y9	Y10 At alternative schools
Y9	Y10 At alternative schools	Y11 At alternative schools
Y10	Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools
Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools	Left school or Y13 at alternative schools
Y12	Y13	Left school Aug 2011
Y13	Left school Aug 2010	

Shaded boxes show the year groups on the Sneyd site.

This option would require the provision of additional places at Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall schools in order to provide sufficient secondary school places in the local area for the community. These would become available for Year 7 admissions from September 2010 and pupils from other year groups would transfer as indicated in Table 5 above. Officers would work with families to find suitable alternative places at the schools it is proposed to enlarge or at other schools where places may be available.

Details of the numbers of additional places proposed at these schools are provided in Table 6 below. It is proposed to enlarge Frank F Harrison by three forms of entry from 2010/11, to enlarge Pool Hayes by two forms of entry from 2010/11 and by a further one form of entry from 2013/14, and to enlarge Willenhall by one form of entry from 2010/11. The number of sixth form places at a school is not fixed in the same way as admissions to Years 7 – 11 and any increase in Post 16 numbers across the schools is expected to be modest as there is a range of opportunities available and many pupils go on to college or work-based training settings. In view of this it is considered that any additional Post 16 numbers can be accommodated.

Table 6 Changes in admission numbers

School	Admission number*				
	Current	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Frank F Harrison	180	270	270	270	270
Pool Hayes	213	270	270	270	300
Willenhall	270	300	300	300	300
Sneyd	250	0	0	0	0

\* Applies to Year 7 and progresses through the school

Table 7 Schools proposed to be enlarged

<b>Frank F Harrison</b>				
Admission Number in 2009: 180				
Proposed Admission Number from 2010:270				
Additional places in year group on phased basis from 2010: 90				
Total number of 11 – 16 places at full implementation: 1,350				
Phased implementation	School Years			
Year Group	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 7	No additional places in any year group	Year 7 additional places	Year 7 additional places	Additional places in all year groups
Year 8		Year 8 no change	Year 8 additional places	
Year 9		Year 9 no change	Year 9 – no change	
Year 10		Year 10 additional places	Year 10 additional places	
Year 11		Year 11 no change	Year 11 additional places	
Post 16		Post 16 additional places	Post 16 additional places	
Total additional places		180 & Post 16	360 & Post 16	450 & Post 16

<b>Pool Hayes</b>				
Admission Number in 2009: 213				
Proposed Admission Number from 2010: 270 and from 2013: 300				
Additional places in year group on phased basis from 2010: 57 and from 2013: 87				
Total number of 11 – 16 places at full implementation: 1,500				
Phased implementation	School Years			
Year Group	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 7	No additional places in any year group	Year 7 additional places	Year 7 additional places	Additional places in all year groups
Year 8		Year 8 no change	Year 8 additional places	
Year 9		Year 9 no change	Year 9 – no change	
Year 10		Year 10 additional places	Year 10 additional places	
Year 11		Year 11 no change	Year 11 additional places	
Post 16		Post 16 additional places	Post 16 additional places	
<b>Total additional places</b>			120 & Post 16	
<b>Willenhall</b>				
Admission Number in 2009: 270				
Proposed Admission Number from 2010: 300				
Additional places in year group on phased basis from 2010: 30				
Total number of 11 – 16 places at full implementation: 1,500				
Phased implementation	School Years			
Year Group	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 7	No additional places in any year group	Year 7 additional places	Year 7 additional places	Additional places in all year groups
Year 8		Year 8 no change	Year 8 additional places	
Year 9		Year 9 no change	Year 9 – no change	
Year 10		Year 10 additional places	Year 10 additional places	
Year 11		Year 11 no change	Year 11 additional places	
Post 16		Post 16 additional places	Post 16 additional places	
<b>Total additional places</b>			60 & Post 16	

Shaded boxes show the year groups on the Sneyd site.

The proposed enlargements at Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall would all be classed as 'significant enlargements' which would require the publication of statutory proposals. These would all be linked with the proposal to close Sneyd and would therefore be the subject of

joint consultation and determination ie none would be considered in isolation by decision-makers.

Temporary accommodation would need to be provided at these three schools in line with the increase in pupil numbers. This would be replaced with purpose-built accommodation through the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

The key advantages and disadvantages of option B are set out in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Option B advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would provide a realistic timescale</li> <li>• Enables pupils to access places at higher achieving schools</li> <li>• Parental preference enhanced by the provision of additional places at three popular over-subscribed schools</li> <li>• Additional places to be provided would enable pupils to transfer in groups</li> <li>• Minimises disruption for pupils</li> <li>• Pupils would complete their key stage at Sneyd</li> <li>• Receiving schools have time to plan for additional pupils from 2010</li> <li>• Additional posts would be available at the receiving schools, creating opportunities for Sneyd staff</li> <li>• 14 -19 proposal ensures the continuity of education provision on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• Pupils from Sneyd would have access to a broader range of curriculum opportunities at the receiving schools; this is further broadened by the partnership working between the receiving schools</li> <li>• Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be secured through this option along side the proposed 14 – 19 provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving schools would receive a large number of additional pupils</li> <li>• Significant temporary accommodation would be required at the receiving schools</li> <li>• Additional classrooms and toilets could be provided but only limited additional specialist teaching spaces</li> <li>• Possible planning implications including complex negotiations with Sport England</li> <li>• Frank F Harrison site is Green Belt and any proposed development would be subject to possible referral to GOWM and possible delay</li> <li>• Capital resources would be required to fund temporary accommodation in advance of BSF</li> <li>• With the rapid decline in pupil numbers at Sneyd, the Schools Funding Formula is unlikely to be sufficient to fund the running of Sneyd especially in 2011/12 when there would only be pupils in Year 9</li> <li>• Challenge of meeting Year 9 entitlement to a broad balanced curriculum in 2011/12</li> <li>• Staff retention issues at Sneyd over the period to closure</li> <li>• The location of the significant amounts of temporary accommodation on the receiving school sites would need to be considered in the context of BSF proposals and site layout</li> </ul>

## **OPTION C**

**Current education provision at Sneyd ceases on 31 August 2010 and significant enlargement of Frank F Harrison from 1 September 2010**

**Sneyd would close on 31 August 2010 and pupils would transfer to Frank F Harrison on 1st September 2010. Frank F Harrison would be enlarged and the intake increased to 360. The intake at Pool Hayes would also be increased by 27 places to 240 from 2013 as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme.**

Frank F Harrison is located on a campus site along with a Children's Centre, Hatherton Primary School, and Mary Elliot School. Frank F Harrison and Hatherton Primary School have entered into a federation and all the schools and the Children's Centre operate effectively as a 'Learning Village' which offers wide range of extended schools, family and community services and activities. Pupils currently attending Sneyd and their families would benefit from the advantages of being part of this development.

All pupils on roll at Sneyd would transfer to Frank F Harrison in September 2010 and the number of 11 -16 places at Frank F Harrison would be increased from 900 to 1,800 and have 11 forms of entry. The number of places available at the enlarged Frank F Harrison would need to exceed the number of pupils on roll in order to provide some spare places to cater for families moving into the area as the other schools in the area are full.

It would not be possible to provide sufficient temporary accommodation on the Frank F Harrison site for this number of pupils in advance of the Building Schools for the Future Programme as the existing accommodation would need to be almost doubled in size in order to provide the range of classrooms and specialist rooms essential for curriculum delivery. However, it would be possible to continue to use the Sneyd building for the next few years and detailed consideration would be given to how all of the accommodation available to the school could best be used in order to maximise opportunities for pupils in terms of curriculum delivery. With the provision of replacement accommodation through the Building Schools for the Future Programme, all pupils could be based at the Frank F Harrison site, however, it would not be possible to meet the requirements for playing fields without the provision of additional land. This could be achieved by continued use of the sports facilities on the Sneyd site although it would be necessary to provide changing rooms. This would have the added benefit of securing continued use of these facilities for the community.

The continued need for part of the Sneyd site for sports facilities would reduce the area of land available at the Sneyd site for other educational developments which could include an Engineering Academy or a Skills Centre.

The key advantages and disadvantages of option C are set out in Table 9 below.



Table 9 Option C advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick implementation</li> <li>• Enables pupils to access places at a higher achieving school</li> <li>• All pupils would transfer to the same school unless parents requested otherwise</li> <li>• Minimises disruption for pupils</li> <li>• Additional posts would be available at the Frank F Harrison, creating opportunities for Sneyd staff</li> <li>• No temporary accommodation required if the Sneyd building is used until BSF</li> <li>• With the availability of the Sneyd building in the interim, the disruption associated with a rebuild of the school through BSF would be minimised</li> <li>• In the short term learning would be retained on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• In the longer term, a 14 – 19 facility would provide continuity of learning on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be secured through this option along side the proposed 14 – 19 provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frank F Harrison would receive a large number of additional pupils in September 2010</li> <li>• It would not be possible to locate all pupils on the Frank F Harrison site in advance of BSF as the scale of temporary accommodation necessary is too large to accommodate on the site and it would also severely restrict redevelopment of the site through BSF</li> <li>• School would need to operate from 2 sites until replacement accommodation through BSF Programme</li> <li>• Possible planning implications including complex negotiations with Sport England</li> <li>• Frank F Harrison site is Green Belt and any proposed development would be subject to possible referral to GOWM and possible delay</li> <li>• Financial viability: operating from 2 sites would attract a split site allowance in the school budget, however, there would be 2 lots of overheads and some additional staffing costs</li> <li>• Some pupils may need to transfer to the other site depending upon the arrangements put in place for the various year groups</li> </ul>

## 14-19 ENGINEERING ACADEMY

This new form of provision has the potential to be the first to be established in the country and would enable Walsall to be at the forefront of educational development.

An engineering academy or University Technical College, specialising in engineering, would exist as a separate provision; pupils would be on its roll and there would be a requirement for a site area and playing fields in proportion to the number of places. The area of land available at the Sneyd site is considerably reduced in size by the lake and as the DCSF is still developing the model for these academies and until there is a clear indication of the minimum number of places required for viability, it will not be known whether the remaining land area would be sufficient. Key aspects of this possible development will be explored during this consultation period and information brought back to Cabinet before any final decision is made.

The DCSF would expect that an engineering academy would also attract some pupils from neighbouring local authorities. The DCSF is very interested in the possibility of a regional facility in Walsall and Walsall College and the University of Wolverhampton have indicated to the local authority and to the DCSF that they would be very interested in participating in such a

development as part of the broader development of the borough-wide entitlement offer for 14 – 19 year olds. Other local authorities will be consulted about proposed development. Relevant officers from the Council and Serco have undertaken initial discussions with the University, Walsall College and the DCSF regarding this possible development and it has been met with positive enthusiasm from all parties. As part of the cabinet decision formal consultations between the local authority, the DCSF, Walsall College and the University Wolverhampton are now taking place.

## **SKILLS CENTRE**

A Skills Centre would also provide a range of opportunities for young people from the local community and Walsall as a whole.

Skills Centres are run in partnership by the schools accessing part time places for their pupils who may attend for 1 or 2 days a week depending upon the options chosen. Pupils would remain on roll at their school and there would be no requirement for playing fields although there would be a need for a recreational area for breaks and lunchtime activities. This approach would enhance the secondary strategy core entitlement offer for pupils in this part of the Borough.

Should the possibility of establishing an Engineering Academy not be supported by all parties, a Skills Centre would be established – thus implementing the area Education Plan as part of our Building Schools for the Future and 14-19 strategies.

## **HOW WOULD THESE OPTIONS AFFECT PUPILS AT SNEYD?**

All pupils on roll at Sneyd would be offered a place at an alternative school.

In options A and B, pupils who start Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 would complete their key stage at Sneyd and all pupils currently in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would also complete their key stage at Sneyd. At the end of the key stage pupils would transfer to other schools on a year on year phased basis from September 2010 as described above.

In Option C, all pupils at Sneyd would transfer to the roll of Frank F Harrison School from September 2010. Assistance will be offered to any parents who may prefer a place at an alternative school.

Staff in the admissions team would work with parents to find the most appropriate alternative school place. There would be extensive liaison between Sneyd and the schools to which pupils would transfer in order to minimise any disruption for pupils.

## **WILL YEAR 7 PUPILS BE ADMITTED TO SNEYD IN SEPTEMBER 2009?**

Pupils will be admitted to Year 7 in September 2009 as no final decisions will have been taken regarding the future of the school. However, some parents may prefer that their child starts secondary education at another school and in these cases the admissions team will help parents to find an alternative school place.

## **HOW WOULD THESE OPTIONS AFFECT STAFF AT SNEYD?**

The staff employed at Sneyd are employees of Walsall Council. If the decision is made to close the school, support will be provided to staff to find alternative employment in a Walsall school. Receiving schools are often keen to secure the services of staff from closing schools as they bring with them knowledge of the pupils and their families in addition to their professional expertise; they can also provide a sense of security for transferring pupils. As additional staff would be required at other schools in all the options under consideration, it is likely that many staff would secure alternative employment. In the event that these efforts are unsuccessful and staff remained without alternative employment when the school closed, they would be entitled to redundancy payment and in some cases access to their pensions. Every effort would be taken to minimise redundancies.

## **HOW WOULD THESE OPTIONS AFFECT THE GOVERNORS AT SNEYD?**

If it is decided to close Sneyd, the remit of the existing governing body would end on 31 August 2012 (options A and B) or in 2010 (option C). There would be opportunities for governors to be appointed to the governing body of other schools following elections for parent and staff representatives. There may also be opportunities for community governors to join other governing bodies.

## **WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE SNEYD BUILDINGS AND SITE?**

The existing buildings and site would continue to be used until August 2012 in options A and B and until the provision of new accommodation on the Frank F Harrison site in option C. The Council wishes to retain education provision on the Sneyd site and detailed consideration is being given to the establishment of a 14-19 Engineering Academy or Skills Centre on the Sneyd site.

## **HOW WILL COMMUNITY USE OF FACILITIES ON THE SNEYD SITE BE RETAINED?**

In the short term, community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be retained. In Options A and B this would be until August 2012. In the medium term and long, these facilities could continue to be made available through the proposed 14-19 Engineering Academy or Skills Centre. In the case of Option C, use would continue in the long term as the sports facilities would be used by an enlarged Frank F Harrison School.

## **HOW WOULD THESE OPTIONS AFFECT FRANK F HARRISON SCHOOL?**

The options under consideration would affect Frank F Harrison School as follows:

**Option A:** some pupils from Sneyd may transfer where places are available.

**Option B:** the school would be enlarged by 3 forms of entry (90 places) from September 2010 when there would be additional pupils in Years 7 and 10 and in the sixth form. From September 2011, there would also be additional places in Years 8 and 11. In September

2012, there would be additional places in all year groups. The total number of additional places would be 450 and together with some additional places in the sixth form. Additional staff would be required because of the increase in pupil numbers.

**Option C:** the school would be enlarged to a greater extent (it is proposed to increase the admission number to 360 from September 2010) and all pupils on roll at Sneyd would be offered a place at Frank F Harrison from September 2010. Some pupils would continue to be educated on the Sneyd site and the arrangements for the best use of all the accommodation available to the school would be decided by the governors. It would be important to bring the two school communities together in some way for educational and social reasons. The provision of replacement accommodation through Building Schools for the Future would enable all pupils to be taught on the Frank F Harrison site; it is proposed to retain use of the sports facilities on the Sneyd site. Additional staff would be required because of the increase in pupil numbers.

**14 – 19 Engineering Academy:** subject to this being established, pupils on roll at Frank F Harrison would be able to apply for a place in Year 10 or in the sixth form.

**Skills Centre:** subject to this being established, pupils on roll at Frank F Harrison would have access to specialist provision and facilities at the Skills Centre. Pupils would remain on roll at Frank F Harrison and would attend the Skills Centre for part of the week. Pupils from other schools would also have access to this provision. The curriculum available at the Skills Centre and the number of places will be considered during the consultation period.

## **HOW WOULD THESE OPTIONS AFFECT POOL HAYES SCHOOL?**

The options under consideration would affect Pool Hayes School as follows:

**Option A:** some pupils from Sneyd may transfer where places are available.

**Option B:** the school would be enlarged by 2 forms of entry (57 places) from September 2010 when there would be additional pupils in Years 7 and 10 and in the sixth form. From September 2011, there would also be additional places in Years 8 and 11. In September 2012, there would be additional places in all year groups giving a total increase of 300 places together with some additional places in the sixth form. The school would be further enlarged by an additional form of entry (30 places) from 2013 as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme. Additional staff would be required because of the increase in pupil numbers.

**Option C:** the school would be enlarged by one form of entry (27 places) from 2013 as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme. Additional staff would be required because of the increase in pupil numbers.

**14 – 19 Engineering Academy:** subject to this being established, pupils on roll at Pool Hayes would be able to apply for a place in Year 10 or in the sixth form.

**Skills Centre:** subject to this being established, pupils on roll at Pool Hayes could have access to specialist provision and facilities at the Skills Centre. Pupils would remain on roll

at Pool Hayes and would attend the Skills Centre for part of the week. Pupils from other schools would also have access to this provision. The curriculum available at the Skills Centre and the number of places will be considered during the consultation period.

## HOW WOULD THESE OPTIONS AFFECT WILLENHALL SCHOOL?

The options under consideration would affect Willenhall School as follows:

**Option A:** some pupils from Sneyd may transfer where places are available.

**Option B:** the school would be enlarged by 1 form of entry (30 places) from September 2010 when there would be additional pupils in Years 7 and 10 and in the sixth form. From September 2011, there would also be additional places in Years 8 and 11. In September 2012, there would be additional places in all year groups giving a total increase of 150 places together with some additional places in the sixth form. Additional staff would be required because of the increase in pupil numbers.

**Option C:** some pupils from Sneyd may transfer where places are available.

**14 – 19 Engineering Academy:** subject to this being established, pupils on roll at Willenhall would be able to apply for a place in Year 10 or in the sixth form.

**Skills Centre:** subject to this being established, pupils on roll at Willenhall could have access to specialist provision and facilities at the Skills Centre. Pupils would remain on roll at Willenhall and would attend the Skills Centre for part of the week. Pupils from other schools would also have access to this provision. The curriculum available at the Skills Centre and the number of places will be considered during the consultation period.

## HOW CAN I MAKE MY VIEWS KNOWN?

**Sneyd** Consultation meetings will be held for staff, governors and the School Council at Sneyd. Consultation meetings with parents will take the form of drop-in sessions in order to give parents an opportunity for individual discussions – please return reply slip if you intend to attend. Details of all these events are provided below.

<b>Sneyd</b>			
	Date	Time	Venue
<b>School Council</b>	Monday 18 May 2009	2. 00 – 3. 00 pm	Sneyd School
<b>Staff</b>	Monday 18 May 2009	3. 30 – 4.30 pm	Sneyd School
<b>Governors</b>	Monday 18 May 2009	6.00 – 7 00 pm	Sneyd School
<b>Parents of current pupils and Year 7 admissions in September 2009</b>	Tuesday 19 May 2009	2. 00 – 4. 30 pm 5. 00 – 7. 30 pm	Sneyd School
	Wednesday 20 May 2009	5. 00 – 7. 30 pm	Mossley Primary School
<b>Drop-in sessions</b>	Thursday 21 May 2009	5. 00 – 8. 00 pm	Elmore Row Community Centre

**Frank F Harrison** Consultation meetings will be held for staff, governors and the School Council at Frank F Harrison. The meeting with parents will take the form of a drop-in session in order to give parents an opportunity for individual discussions – please return reply slip if you intend to attend. Details of all these events are provided below.

<b>Frank F Harrison</b>			
	Date	Time	Venue
<b>School Council</b>	Wednesday 3 June 2009	2. 00 – 3. 00 pm	Frank F Harrison School
<b>Staff</b>	Wednesday 3 June 2009	3. 15 – 4. 15 pm	Frank F Harrison School
<b>Governors</b>	Wednesday 3 June 2009	5. 00 – 6.00 pm	Frank F Harrison School
<b>Parents of current pupils and Year 7 admissions in September 2009</b>	Wednesday 3 June 2009	<b>Drop-in session</b> 6. 30 – 8. 30 pm	Frank F Harrison School

**Pool Hayes** Consultation meetings will be held for staff, governors and the School Council at Pool Hayes. The meeting with parents will take the form of a drop-in session in order to give parents an opportunity for individual discussions – please return reply slip if you intend to attend. Details of all these meetings are provided below.

<b>Pool Hayes</b>			
	Date	Time	Venue
<b>School Council</b>	Thursday 4 June 2009	2. 00 – 3. 00 pm	Pool Hayes School
<b>Staff</b>	Thursday 4 June 2009	3. 15 – 4. 15 pm	Pool Hayes School
<b>Governors</b>	Thursday 4 June 2009	5. 30 – 6.30 pm	Pool Hayes School
<b>Parents of current pupils and Year 7 admissions September 2009</b>	Thursday 4 June 2009	<b>Drop-in session</b> 6. 30 – 8. 00 pm	Pool Hayes School

**Willenhall** Consultation meetings will be held for staff, governors and the School Council at Willenhall. The meeting with parents will take the form of a drop-in session in order to give parents an opportunity for individual discussions – please return reply slip if you intend to attend. Details of all these meetings are provided below.

<b>Willenhall</b>			
	Date	Time	Venue
<b>School Council</b>	Tuesday 9 June 2009	2. 00 – 3. 00 pm	Willenhall School
<b>Staff</b>	Tuesday 9 June 2009	3. 00 – 4. 00 pm	Willenhall School
<b>Governors</b>	Tuesday 9 June 2009	4.00 – 5. 00 pm	Willenhall School
<b>Parents of current pupils and Year 7 admissions September 2009</b>	Tuesday 9 June 2009	<b>Drop-in session</b> 5. 30 – 6. 30 pm	Willenhall School

**Consultation response form** Although it may not be possible for everyone to attend these meetings, the attached consultation response form provides an opportunity to comment on the proposal.

Please do complete the consultation response form. We do want to hear your views. Unfortunately it will not be possible to send individual replies to consultation responses; however, issues raised will be included in a report on the outcome of consultation which will be considered by Walsall Council (Cabinet).

All responses should be received by 19 June 2009. A report on the response to the consultation will be considered by Walsall Council (Cabinet) in July 2009.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The timetable below is provisional and is dependent upon decisions at each stage; however, every effort will be made to keep to it.

8 May 2009	Consultation starts (6 weeks)
19 June 2009	Consultation ends
July 2009	Walsall Council (Cabinet) considers response to consultation and decides whether to proceed with the proposal
September 2009	Statutory notice(s) published, 6 weeks representation period
November 2009	Consideration of proposal by Walsall Cabinet and final decision taken
November 2009	Notification of decision to pupils, parents, staff and governors at the schools

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

More information is available from:

Susan Lupton, Head of Planning and Development  
Tel 01922 686231  
[Susan.lupton@walsallcs.serco.com](mailto:Susan.lupton@walsallcs.serco.com)

This document is available in large print. Please contact:

David Whitehouse  
Tel 01922 686341  
[David.whitehouse@walsallcs.serco.com](mailto:David.whitehouse@walsallcs.serco.com)



**Walsall Children's Services**

**Appendix 1**

**Availability of Places at Secondary Schools in Walsall (Sept 2009)**

	Adm no	Estimated Pupil numbers Sept 2009					Estimated Available places Sept 2009					
		Y7#	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Total
Aldridge	259	259	258	258	258	258	0	1	1	1	1	4
Alumwell	195	189	179	151	160	155	6	16	44	35	40	141
Barr Beacon	245*	260	251	236	243	242	0	0	9	2	3	14
Blue Coat CE	180	178	150	127	163	154	2	30	53	17	26	128
Brownhills	182**	100	85	120	127	149	68	97	62	55	33	315
Darlaston	245	131	134	155	179	172	114	111	90	66	73	454
Frank F Harrison	180	180	179	172	164	159	0	1	8	16	21	46
Joseph Leckie	240	180	145	156	146	188	60	95	84	94	52	385
Pool Hayes	213	213	216	208	202	206	0	0	5	11	7	23
Queen Mary's G	96	96	96	95	96	96	0	0	1	0	0	1
Queen Mary's H	96	97	96	97	93	95	0	0	0	3	1	4
Shelfield Community Academy	240	242	252	237	184	213	0	0	3	56	27	86
Shire Oak	238	240	250	245	234	231	0	0	0	4	7	11
St Francis of Assisi	180	186	183	183	178	180	0	0	0	2	0	2
St Thomas More	210***	243	248	240	230	234	0	0	0	0	0	0
Streetly	243	243	244	231	213	240	0	0	12	30	3	45
Walsall Academy	168	168	168	168	168	168	0	0	0	0	0	0
Willenhall	270	270	273	255	269	260	0	0	15	1	10	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,680</b>	<b>3,475</b>	<b>3,407</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>3,307</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>1,685</b>
Sneyd Pupils	250	100	110	127	148	183						

# Offers as at March for September 2009 admission.

\* Barr Beacon: 260 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 245 Adm No for Y8 – Y11

\*\* Brownhills: 168 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 182 Adm No for Y8 – Y11

\*\*\* St Thomas More: 243 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 210 Adm No for Y8 – Y11



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## Walsall Children's Services

### THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

The options under consideration also affect the following schools at which significant enlargement is proposed:

**Frank F Harrison Engineering College  
Pool Hayes Arts and Community School  
Willenhall School Sports College.**

**Consideration is also being given to the establishment of a 14-19 Engineering Academy and the possible establishment of a Skills Centre.**

## CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Walsall Children's Services – Serco is undertaking public consultation on the proposals set out in the consultation document. The consultation period will last until 19 June 2009.

A consultation document has been published and is available from: Walsall Children's Services – Serco; Sneyd, Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall Schools; and local libraries. It is also available on the Walsall Children's Services – Serco website:- [www.educationwalsall.com](http://www.educationwalsall.com) and can be accessed through the School Organisation section.

All interested parties are invited to make their views known by using this form to comment on the proposals. The form should be returned by **19 June 2009** to:-

Susan Lupton  
Head of Planning and Development Services  
Walsall Children's Services - Serco  
Education Development Centre  
Pelsall Lane, Rushall  
Walsall, WS4 1NG

It will help us to analyse consultation responses if you would indicate your interest in the proposal:

School	Pupil	Parent	Staff	Governor
Sneyd				
Frank F Harrison				

<b>Pool Hayes</b>				
<b>Willenhall</b>				
<b>Other</b>	<b>Please state your interest</b>			

**Consultation Process**

1. Have you seen a copy of the consultation pack?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. Have you found this document helpful?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

3. Have you attended one of the consultation meetings or drop-in sessions?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

**Options A, B and C**

4. Please indicate your view of the three options by ranking them from 1 to 3 with a score of 1 for your most preferred option and a score of 3 for your least preferred option.

Option A [ ] Option B [ ] Option C [ ]

Please give the reasons why you prefer the option you have ranked 1.

Reasons
---------

**14-19 Engineering Academy**

5. Do you support the proposal to establish a 14-19 Engineering Academy?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

Have you any comments on this proposal?

Comment:

**Skills Centre**

6. Do you support the proposal to establish a Skills Centre?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

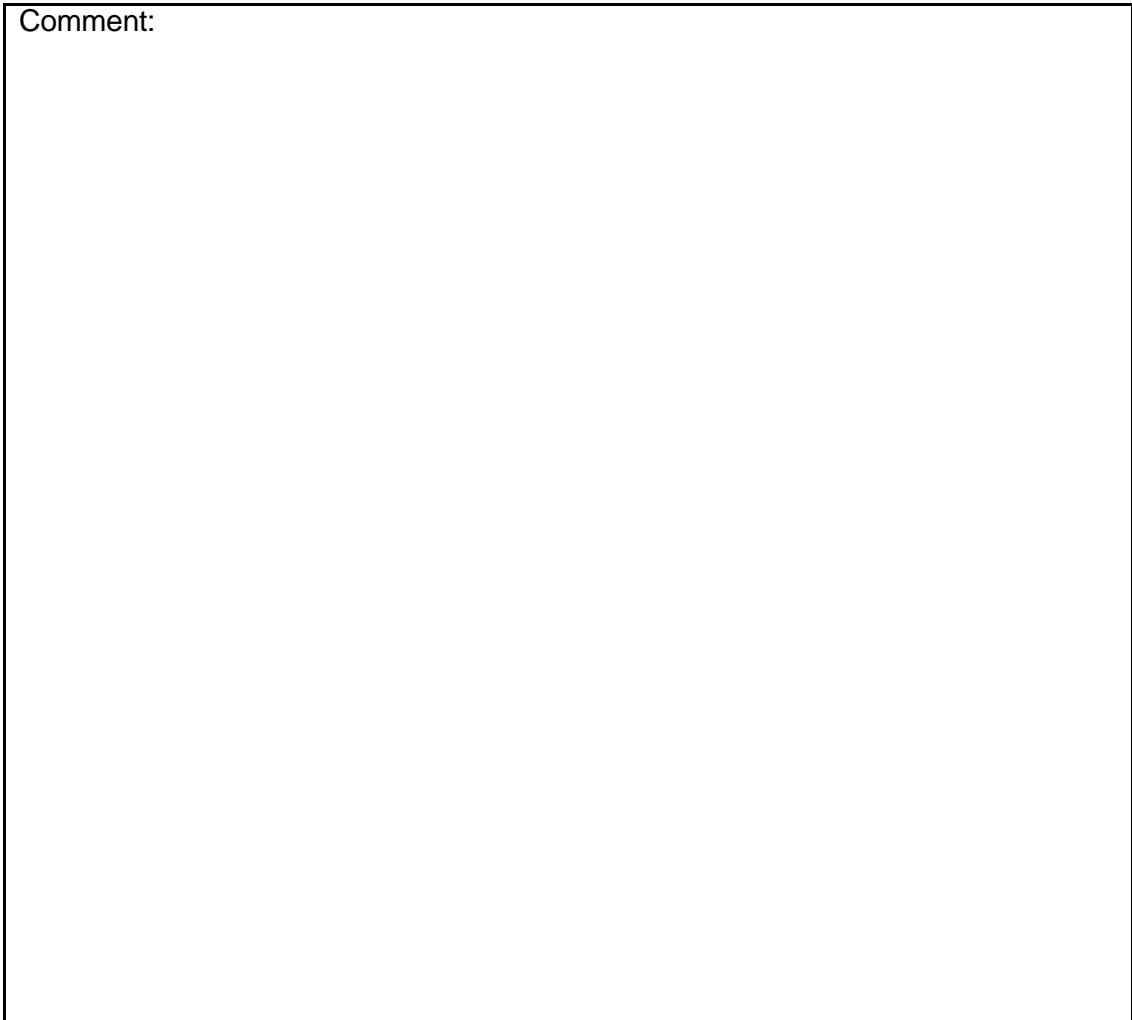
Have you any comments on this proposal?

Comment:

**Other comments**

7. Please use the space below for any other comments.

Comment:



Thank you for taking the time to complete this consultation response form. All responses will be made available to Walsall's Cabinet to assist in their decision making on these matters.

Please note that it will not be possible to reply individually to consultation responses. However, issues raised will be included in a report on the outcome of consultation which will be considered by Walsall Council (Cabinet).

Comments and objections made during this consultation period will not automatically go forward into the statutory phase of the process.

This form should be returned by **19 June 2009** to the address given on page 19.



**Walsall Children's Services**

**THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY – A  
SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE**

**CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

14 September 2009

# THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

## INTRODUCTION

Walsall Children's Services – Serco is undertaking public consultation on behalf of Walsall Council on the future of Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College. This short consultation on a single option follows consideration by Cabinet in July 2009 on the outcome of consultation on three options held in May/June 2009.

The consultation period of three weeks will last until 2 October 2009. No decisions will be taken by Walsall Council until 21 October 2009, following full consideration of consultation responses.

### **SNEYD COMMUNITY – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE**

Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College provides secondary education for pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 years; the school has specialist status for maths and computing.

### **WHY IS THE FUTURE OF SNEYD UNDER CONSIDERATION?**

The future of the school is under consideration as a result of a sustained and significant fall in the number of pupils on roll at the school and also because of the challenges the school continues to face in its efforts to raise standards. These factors have resulted in the school becoming educationally and financially unviable.

**Pupil numbers** In January 2009, there were 893 pupils on roll at Sneyd; 99 of these pupils were in the sixth form. The number of places in each year group is 250 but the number of pupils admitted to Year 7 has fallen considerably over the last five years. In Jan 2009, there were only 110 pupils in Year 7, approximately half the number (226) in Year 11. As a result of the fall in admissions, 34% of places at the school are empty / surplus. Most of the funding a school receives is based on the number of pupils on roll and a reduction in pupil numbers affects the financial viability of a school.

**Standards** Sneyd is a National Challenge School. Rapid improvement is required by the government at National Challenge Schools to ensure that 30% of more pupils achieve five good grades at GCSE (or equivalent) including English and mathematics by 2011. Although Sneyd has been working to improve educational standards at the school for a number of years with additional support from the local authority and the Black Country Challenge, standards remain inadequate. The school was in special measures between January 2005 and November 2006. However, improvements made by the school during this intervention were not sustained once the school was removed from special measures. A further inspection by Ofsted in November 2008 determined that the school required significant improvement and Sneyd was given a Notice to Improve. To date, improvement at Sneyd has only been identified as steady both by Ofsted (May 2009) and by the Local Authority.

Standards are significantly lower than at similar schools. The 2008 Key Stage 4 results were disappointing and show a downward trend over the last two years. At 19% 5+A\*-C (including English and maths) the school is in the bottom 9% of all secondary schools in the country. Its CVA, which measures the progress made by pupils at the school is, at 961, one of the lowest (bottom 1%) in the country. Indications for 2009 do not suggest improvement will be rapid; it remains unlikely that the school will secure 30% in 2011. Confidence in the school sustaining improvement and attaining the national expectation by 2011 is low at present (as indicated by both the Black Country Challenge and School Improvement Advisers). Failure to perform above this level in 2011 would result in a direction from the Secretary of State. Unvalidated results for 2009 show improvement on the key GCSE measures although the school still remains below the 30% national benchmark for pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics. The school does not demonstrate a history of being able to sustain and build

upon improvement following a period of significant intervention and this remains of concern to the Local Authority.

## WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL?

In July 2009, Cabinet considered the outcome of consultation on three options for the future of Sneyd and decided to hold a further, short consultation on a single option (option A). Details of this option are provided below. This option allows for the continuation of education provision on the Sneyd site in the form of a 14-19 Engineering Academy or a Skills Centre.

### OPTION A

**Current education provision at Sneyd ceases on 31 August 2012. No pupils would be admitted to Year 7 or the sixth form in September 2010 and subsequent years. Pupils would transfer on a year on year basis to places at other schools in the borough.**

Pupils who start Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 would complete their key stage at Sneyd. All pupils currently in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would also complete their key stage at Sneyd. There would be no admissions to Year 7 or to the sixth form in September 2010 and following years. Details of the phased implementation of this option are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Phased transfer arrangements

Year Group in 2009/10 school year	Transfer to alternative school
Y7 (2009 admission)	Sept 2012
Y8	Sept 2011
Y9	Sept 2010
Y10	Sept 2011 (Post 16)
Y11	Sept 2010 (Post 16)
Y12	Leave August 2011; alternative places available in Sept 2010 as appropriate
Y13	Leave August 2010

This would mean that the year groups on roll at Sneyd in the three school years prior to closure would be as shown in Table 2 below. In the 2009/10 school year, all year groups would operate. In 2010/11, the school population would comprise pupils in Year 8, Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13. In the 2011/12 school year, there would only be pupils in Year 9. During this transition period the local authority will work with the Black Country Challenge to provide support to the school.

Table 2 Proposed phased implementation arrangements

School Year		
2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Y7	Y8	Y9
Y8	Y9	Y10 At alternative schools
Y9	Y10 At alternative schools	Y11 At alternative schools
Y10	Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools
Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools	Left school or Y13 at alternative schools
Y12	Y13	Left school Aug 2011
Y13	Left school Aug 2010	

Shaded boxes show the year groups on the Sneyd site.



There would be sufficient places available at other schools to accommodate transferring pupils from Sneyd. Details of the estimated availability of places at alternative schools are provided in Appendix 1.

Details of the advantages and disadvantages associated with this option are provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Option A advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would provide a realistic timescale</li> <li>• Enables pupils to access places at higher achieving schools</li> <li>• Availability of places would enable pupils to transfer in groups</li> <li>• Minimises disruption for pupils</li> <li>• Pupils would complete their key stage at Sneyd</li> <li>• Receiving schools have time to plan for additional pupils from 2010</li> <li>• Temporary accommodation would not be required</li> <li>• Additional posts would be available at the receiving schools, creating opportunities for Sneyd staff</li> <li>• 14 -19 proposal ensures the continuity of education provision on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• Pupils from Sneyd would have access to a broader range of curriculum opportunities at the receiving schools</li> <li>• Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be secured through this option along side the proposed 14 – 19 provision</li> <li>• Additional places would be provided at Pool Hayes as part of the implementation of the secondary strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving schools would receive a large number of additional pupils</li> <li>• With the rapid decline in pupil numbers at Sneyd, the Schools Funding Formula is unlikely to be sufficient to fund the running of Sneyd especially in 2011/12 when there would only be pupils in Year 9</li> <li>• Challenge of meeting Year 9 entitlement to a broad balanced curriculum in 2011/12</li> <li>• Staff retention issues at Sneyd over the period to closure</li> </ul>

## HOW WOULD THIS OPTION AFFECT PUPILS AT SNEYD?

All pupils on roll at Sneyd would be offered a place at an alternative school.

Pupils who start Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 would complete their key stage at Sneyd as would all pupils currently in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. At the end of their key stage pupils would transfer to other schools on a year on year phased basis from September 2010 as described above. Pupils starting sixth form studies in September 2009 would also be able to complete their two years of study at Sneyd.

Staff in the admissions team would work with parents to find the most appropriate alternative school place for their children. There would be extensive liaison between Sneyd and the schools to which pupils would transfer in order to minimise any disruption for pupils.

Pupils admitted to Year 7 in September 2009 would be able to complete Key Stage 3 at Sneyd, however, in view of the uncertainty about the future of the school, some parents may prefer their child to transfer to another school and in these cases the admissions team and Choice Adviser will help parents to find an alternative school place.

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSFER TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

Subject to Cabinet's decision in October, it is expected that the final decision regarding the future of Sneyd will be taken in January 2010. If the decision is to close the school, parents of Year 9 pupils (who would transfer to another school in September 2010) will be sent an application form and information about the availability of places, options and transport etc and arrangements will be made for school visits. Completed applications will be processed in line with published admissions criteria and places offered. Given the availability of places, it is expected that pupils will be able to move to other schools in friendship groups. At present there are some places available in the relevant year group at Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall, however, some pupils would transfer to more distant schools where larger numbers of places are available (Alumwell, Blue Coat CE, Brownhills, Darlaston and Joseph Leckie); small numbers of places are also available at other schools and details of these can be found in Appendix 1. In the autumn term 2010 this process would be followed for pupils in Year 8 in the 2009/10 school year but arrangements would be completed earlier in the year. Similar arrangements will be put in place for pupils starting Year 7 at Sneyd in September 2009 who would transfer to other schools in September 2012.

Similar assistance will be offered to Year 11 pupils who wish to join the sixth form at another school.

Receiving schools would hold a programme of transition activities in conjunction with Sneyd during the summer term. Transition activities are expected to include a variety of visits, joint activities including sports and performances and taster activities.

## **TRANSPORT TO OTHER SCHOOLS**

The majority of pupils would transfer to a more distant school and the cost of transport would be met for pupils who live outside the statutory walking distance of 3 miles to their nearest appropriate school. Children from low income families may qualify for transport to schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home. Children from low income groups are legally defined as those who are entitled to free school meals or those whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Eligibility for transport assistance is assessed on an annual basis.

Transport costs would only be met for eligible pupils who transferred to another school at the end of their key stage. Post 16 pupils do not receive assistance with transport costs as they are over statutory school age, however, provision may be continued for pupils with a SEN statement.

## **WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR RECEIVING SCHOOLS?**

At the end of Year 9, Sneyd pupils would transfer to other schools at which places are available. Although some places are available at nearby schools, some pupils would take up places at more distant schools where there are larger numbers of empty places, for example Alumwell, Blue Coat CE, Brownhills, Grace Academy Darlaston and Joseph Leckie. Depending upon the numbers transferring to individual schools, additional staff may be required and additional teaching groups may need to be set up.

Receiving schools would hold a programme of transition activities in conjunction with Sneyd during the summer term. Transition activities are expected to include a variety of visits, joint activities including sports and performances and taster activities.

## **WILL YEAR 7 PUPILS BE ADMITTED TO SNEYD IN SEPTEMBER 2010?**

If option A is implemented, no pupils would be admitted to Year 7 at Sneyd in September 2010. However, as the final decision is not expected to be taken until January 2010, parents will be able to

include a preference for a place at Sneyd on their Preference Form as the closing date for applications for transfer to secondary school is 23 October 2009. Parents are urged to include other schools on their Preference Form because if the final decision is to close Sneyd, all preferences for Sneyd will be set aside. In following years parents would be able to list local secondary schools on their Preference Forms and it is expected that pupils would get a place at a local school.

#### **HOW WOULD THIS OPTION AFFECT STAFF AT SNEYD?**

The staff employed at Sneyd are employees of Walsall Council. If the decision is made to close the school, support will be provided to staff to find alternative employment in a Walsall school. Receiving schools are often keen to secure the services of staff from closing schools as they bring with them knowledge of the pupils and their families in addition to their professional expertise; they can also provide a sense of security for transferring pupils. As additional staff would be required at a number of other schools, it is likely that many staff would secure alternative employment. In the event that these efforts are unsuccessful and staff remained without alternative employment when the school closed, they would be entitled to redundancy payment and in some cases access to their pensions. Every effort would be taken to minimise redundancies.

#### **HOW WOULD THIS OPTION AFFECT THE GOVERNORS AT SNEYD?**

If it is decided to close Sneyd, the remit of the existing governing body would end on 31 August 2012. There would be opportunities for governors to be appointed to the governing body of other schools following elections for parent and staff representatives. There may also be opportunities for community governors to join other governing bodies.

#### **WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE SNEYD BUILDINGS AND SITE?**

The existing buildings and site would continue to be used until August 2012. The Council wishes to retain education provision on the Sneyd site and detailed consideration is being given to the establishment of a 14-19 Engineering Academy or Skills Centre on the Sneyd site.

#### **HOW WILL COMMUNITY USE OF FACILITIES ON THE SNEYD SITE BE RETAINED?**

Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be retained until August 2012. In the medium and longer term, these facilities could continue to be made available for community use through another secondary school, the proposed 14-19 Engineering Academy or Skills Centre or through other arrangements.

#### **HOW CAN I MAKE MY VIEWS KNOWN?**

The attached consultation response form provides an opportunity to comment on the proposal. Please do complete the consultation response form. We do want to hear your views. Unfortunately it will not be possible to send individual replies to consultation responses; however, issues raised will be included in a report on the outcome of consultation which will be considered by Walsall Council (Cabinet).

All responses should be received by 2 October 2009. A report on the response to the consultation will be considered by Walsall Council (Cabinet) on 21 October 2009.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The timetable below is provisional and is dependent upon decisions at each stage; however, every effort will be made to keep to it.

14 September 2009	Short consultation starts (approx 3 weeks)
2 October 2009	Consultation ends
21 October 2009	Walsall Council (Cabinet) considers response to consultation and decides whether to proceed with the proposal
November 2009	Statutory notice(s) published, 6 weeks representation period
January 2010	Consideration of proposal by Walsall Cabinet and final decision taken
January 2010	Notification of decision to pupils, parents, staff and governors at the schools

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

More information is available from:

Susan Lupton, Head of Planning and Development  
Tel 01922 686231  
[Susan.lupton@walsallcs.serco.com](mailto:Susan.lupton@walsallcs.serco.com)

This document is available in large print. Please contact:

David Whitehouse  
Tel 01922 686341  
[David.whitehouse@walsallcs.serco.com](mailto:David.whitehouse@walsallcs.serco.com)



Walsall Children's Services

Appendix 1

Availability of Places at Secondary Schools in Walsall (Sept 2009)

The columns headed Y9 provide an indication of places expected to be available for pupils transferring into Year 10 at other schools in September 2010

	Adm no	Estimated Pupil numbers Sept 2009					Estimated Available places Sept 2009					
		Y7#	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Total
Aldridge	259	259	258	258	258	258	0	1	1	1	1	4
Alumwell	195	189	179	151	160	155	6	16	44	35	40	141
Barr Beacon	245*	260	251	236	243	242	0	0	9	2	3	14
Blue Coat CE	180	178	150	127	163	154	2	30	53	17	26	128
Brownhills	182**	100	85	120	127	149	68	97	62	55	33	315
Darlaston	245	131	134	155	179	172	114	111	90	66	73	454
Frank F Harrison	180	180	179	172	164	159	0	1	8	16	21	46
Joseph Leckie	240	180	145	156	146	188	60	95	84	94	52	385
Pool Hayes	213	213	216	208	202	206	0	0	5	11	7	23
Queen Mary's G	96	96	96	95	96	96	0	0	1	0	0	1
Queen Mary's H	96	97	96	97	93	95	0	0	0	3	1	4
Shelfield Community Academy	240	242	252	237	184	213	0	0	3	56	27	86
Shire Oak	238	240	250	245	234	231	0	0	0	4	7	11
St Francis of Assisi	180	186	183	183	178	180	0	0	0	2	0	2
St Thomas More	210***	243	248	240	230	234	0	0	0	0	0	0
Streetly	243	243	244	231	213	240	0	0	12	30	3	45
Walsall Academy	168	168	168	168	168	168	0	0	0	0	0	0
Willenhall	270	270	273	255	269	260	0	0	15	1	10	26
Total	3,680	3,475	3,407	3,334	3,307	3,400	250	351	387	393	304	1,685
Sneyd Pupils	250	100	110	127	148	183						

# Offers as at March for September 2009 admission.

\* Barr Beacon: 260 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 245 Adm No for Y8 – Y11

\*\* Brownhills: 168 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 182 Adm No for Y8 – Y11

\*\*\* St Thomas More: 243 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 210 Adm No for Y8 – Y11

**THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND  
COMPUTING COLLEGE**

**CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM**

Walsall Children’s Services – Serco is undertaking public consultation on the proposals set out in the consultation document. The consultation period will end on 2 October 2009.

A consultation document has been published and is available from: Walsall Children’s Services – Serco; Sneyd and local libraries. It is also available on the Walsall Children’s Services – Serco website:-[www.educationwalsall.com](http://www.educationwalsall.com) and can be accessed through the School Organisation section.

All interested parties are invited to make their views known by using this form to comment on the proposals. The form should be returned by **2 October 2009** to:-

Susan Lupton  
Head of Planning and Development Services  
Walsall Children’s Services - Serco  
Education Development Centre  
Pelsall Lane, Rushall  
Walsall, WS4 1NG

Please note that it will not be possible to reply individually to consultation responses. However, issues raised will be included in a report on the outcome of consultation which will be considered by Walsall Council (Cabinet).

Comments and objections made during this consultation period will not automatically go forward into the statutory phase of the process.

It will help us to analyse consultation responses if you would indicate your interest in the proposal:

School	Pupil	Parent	Staff	Governor
Sneyd				
Other secondary school (state which)				
Primary school (state which)				
Other	Please state your interest			

## Consultation Process

1. Have you seen a copy of the consultation pack?  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
2. Have you found this document helpful?  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
3. Please indicate your views on option A.

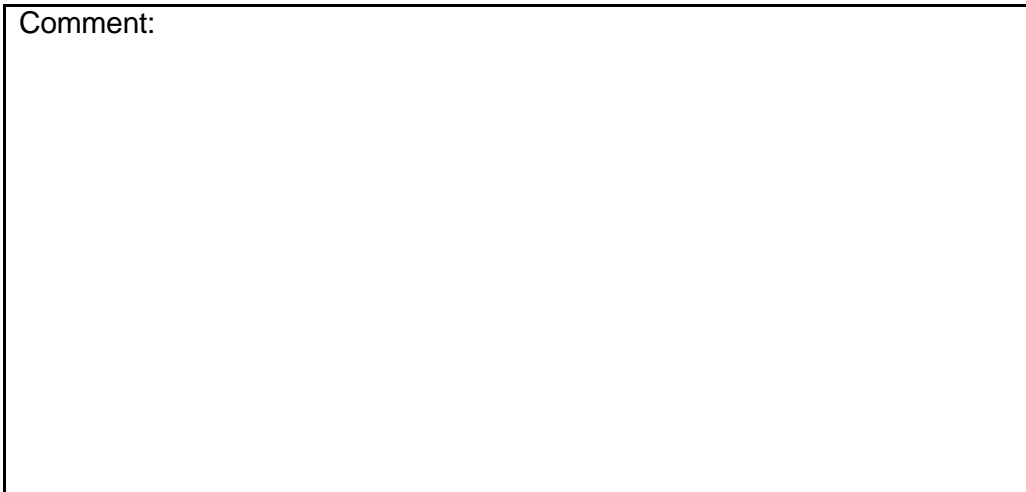
Views



## Other comments

4. Please use the space below for any other comments.

Comment:



Thank you for taking the time to complete this consultation response form. All responses will be made available to Walsall's Cabinet to assist in their decision making on these matters.

This form should be returned by **2 October 2009** to the address given on page 9.

department for  
**children, schools and families**

## Decision Makers' Guidance (Local Authorities and Schools Adjudicator) for:

# Closing a Maintained Mainstream School

For further information:

School Organisation Unit  
DCSF  
Mowden Hall  
Darlington  
DL3 9BG

Tel: 01325 391274

Email: [school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg)



This guidance is extracted, for ease of reference by decision makers, from the full version of the “Closing a Maintained Mainstream School” guide. The statutory guidance sections are indicated by shading.

## Stage 4 – Decision

### Who Will Decide the Proposals?

4.1 Decisions on school organisation proposals are taken by the LA or by the schools adjudicator. In this chapter both are covered by the form of words “Decision Maker” which applies equally to both. Paragraphs 7-8 and 19 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006 set out who should decide proposals for school closures. Most decisions will be taken by the LA, however there is provision for some rights of appeal to the schools adjudicator.

4.2 The Department does not prescribe the process by which an LA carry out their decision-making function (e.g. full Cabinet or delegation to Cabinet member or officials). This is a matter for the LA to determine but the requirement to have regard to statutory guidance (see paragraph 4.15 below) applies equally to the body or individual that takes the decision).

4.3 Where proposals are published by the LA and there are no objections and the proposals are not “related” to other proposals, the proposals **must** be determined by the LA under Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006. The proposals should then be decided within 2 months (and if not, the proposals must be referred to the schools adjudicator) and there is no provision for an appeal against the LA’s decision. A conditional approval cannot be given where proposals are decided under this paragraph.

4.4 If there are objections to the proposals, or there are no objections but the proposals are “related” to other proposals, the proposals **must** be decided under Paragraph 8 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006. The LA will normally be the decision maker (i.e. except where the proposals are related to proposals for the establishment of a new school and the schools adjudicator is required to decide the new school proposals – see paragraph 5.6 of Part A, and paragraph 4.6 of Part B, of “Establishing a New Maintained Mainstream School”). If the LA fail to decide proposals within 2 months from the end of the representation period they **must** forward the proposals and any representations (i.e. not withdrawn in writing), to the schools adjudicator for decision. They **must** forward the proposals within one week from the end of the 2 month period.

### Who Can Appeal Against an LA Decision?

4.5 There is no right of appeal where proposals are decided under Section 19 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006. In all other cases the following bodies may appeal against an LA decision:

- The local Church of England diocese;
- The Bishop of the local Roman Catholic diocese;

- The Learning and Skills Council where the school provides education for pupils aged 14 and over; and
- In the case of **foundation** and **voluntary** schools only - the governing body or trustees of the school that is proposed for closure.

4.6 Appeals **must** be submitted to the LA within 4 weeks of the notification of the LA's decision. On receipt of an appeal the LA **must** then send the proposals, and the comments and objections received, to the schools adjudicator within 1 week of the receipt of the appeal. The LA should also send a copy of the minutes of the LA's meeting or other record of the decision and any relevant papers. Where the proposals are "related" to other proposals, all the "related" proposals should be sent to the schools adjudicator.

### **Checks on Receipt of Statutory Proposals**

4.7 There are 4 key issues which the Decision Maker must consider before judging the respective factors and merits of the statutory proposals:-

- Is any information missing? If so, the Decision Maker should write immediately to the proposer specifying a date by which the information must be provided;
- Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements? (see paragraph 4.8 below);
- Has the statutory consultation been carried out prior to the publication of the notice? (see paragraph 4.9 below); and
- Are the proposals "related" to other published proposals? (see paragraphs 4.10 - 4.14 below) and should therefore be considered together.

### **Does the Published Notice Comply with Statutory Requirements?**

4.8 The Decision Maker should consider whether the notice is valid as soon as a copy is received. Where a published notice does not comply with statutory requirements - as set out in The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (SI:2007 - 1288) (as amended) - it may be judged invalid and the Decision Maker should consider whether they can decide the proposals.

### **Has the Statutory Consultation Been Carried Out Prior to the Publication of the Notice?**

4.9 Details of the consultation should be included in the proposals. The Decision Maker must be satisfied that the consultation meets statutory requirements (see Stage 1 paragraphs 1.2 – 1.6). If some parties submit objections on the basis that consultation was not adequate, the Decision Maker may wish to take legal advice on the points raised. If the requirements have not been met, the Decision Maker may judge the proposals to be invalid and should consider whether they can decide the proposals. Alternatively the Decision Maker may take into account the sufficiency and quality of the consultation as part of their overall judgement of the proposals as a whole.

## **Are the Proposals Related to Other Published Proposals?**

4.10 Paragraphs 9 and 19 of Schedule 2 to the EIA 2006 provide that any proposals that are “related to” particular proposals (e.g. for a new school, school closure or proposals by the LSC to deal with inadequate 16-19 provision proposals) must be considered together. Where the proposals are related to the establishment of a new school, and the schools adjudicator must decide the new school proposals (see paragraph 4.4 above) the schools adjudicator must decide the related proposals together. Paragraphs 4.11 – 4.14 provide statutory guidance on whether proposals should be regarded as “related”.

4.11 Generally, proposals should be regarded as “related” if they are included on the same notice (unless the notice makes it clear that the proposals are not “related”). Proposals should be regarded as “related” if the notice makes a reference to a link to other proposals. If the statutory notices do not confirm a link, but it is clear that a decision on one of the proposals would be likely to directly affect the outcome or consideration of the other, the proposals should be regarded as “related”. Proposals for a school competition should be considered together with proposals for any school closure where there is a clear link.

4.12 Where proposals are “related”, the decisions should be compatible e.g. if one set of proposals is for the removal of provision, and another is for the establishment or enlargement of provision for displaced pupils, both should be approved or rejected.

4.13 Where proposals for a closing school are “related” to proposals published by the local LSC, which are to be decided by the Secretary of State, the Decision Maker should defer taking a decision until the Secretary of State has taken a decision on the LSC proposals. This applies where the proposals before the Decision Maker concern:

- a. the school that is the subject of the LSC proposals;
- b. any other secondary school, maintained by the same LA that maintains a school that is the subject of the LSC proposals; or
- c. any other secondary school in the same LA area as any FE college which is the subject of the LSC proposals.

4.14 The proposals will be regarded as “related” if their implementation would prevent or undermine effective implementation of the LSC proposals.

## **Statutory Guidance – Factors to be Considered by Decision Makers**

4.15 Paragraphs 8(6) and 17 of Schedule 2 to the EIA 2006 provides that both the LA and schools adjudicator are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when they take a decision on proposals. Paragraphs 4.16 to 4.62 below contain the statutory guidance on considering proposals for school closure.

4.16 The following factors should not be taken to be exhaustive. Their importance will vary, depending on the type and circumstances of the proposals. All proposals should be considered on their individual merits.

## EFFECT ON STANDARDS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### A System Shaped by Parents

4.17 The Government's aim, as set out in the Five Year Strategy for Education and Learners and the Schools White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools For All*, is to create a school system shaped by parents which delivers excellence and equity. In particular, the Government wishes to see a dynamic system in which:

- weak schools that need to be closed are closed quickly and replaced by new ones where necessary;
- the best schools are able to expand and spread their ethos and success; and
- new providers have the opportunity to share their energy and talents by establishing new schools - whether as voluntary schools, Trust schools or Academies - and forming Trusts for existing schools.

4.18 The EIA 2006 amends the Education Act 1996 to place new duties on LAs to secure diversity in the provision of schools and to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of schools in their areas. In addition, LAs are under a specific **duty** to respond to representations from parents about the provision of schools, including requests to establish new schools or make changes to existing schools. The Government's aim is to secure a more diverse and dynamic schools system which is shaped by parents. The Decision Maker should take into account the extent to which the proposals are consistent with the new duties on LAs.

### Standards

4.19 The Government wishes to encourage changes to local school provision which will boost standards and opportunities for young people, while matching school place supply as closely as possible to pupils' and parents' needs and wishes.

4.20 Decision Makers should be satisfied that proposals for a school closure will contribute to raising local standards of provision, and will lead to improved attainment for children and young people. They should pay particular attention to the effects on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic groups, children from deprived backgrounds and children in care, with the aim of narrowing attainment gaps.

4.21 Decision Makers should be satisfied that when proposals lead to children being displaced, any alternative provision will meet the statutory SEN improvement test (see paragraphs 4.55 to 4.61).

4.22 Where a school is to be closed so that it may be amalgamated with a more successful and/or popular school, the Decision Maker should again normally approve these proposals, subject to evidence being provided by the LA and other interests that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

### Fresh Start and Collaborative Restarts

4.23 Fresh Start and Collaborative Restart provide for poorly performing schools

which are struggling to improve, to close and be replaced with new school provision, usually on the same site. When considering the closure of any school causing concern and, where relevant, the expansion of other schools, the Decision Maker should take into account the popularity with parents of alternative schools.

4.24 For all closure and Fresh Start proposals involving schools causing concern, copies of the Ofsted monitoring letters for the relevant schools should be made available. The Decision Maker should have regard to the length of time the school has been in special measures, needing significant improvement or otherwise causing concern, the progress it has made, the prognosis for improvement, and the availability of places at other existing or proposed schools within a reasonable travelling distance. There should be a presumption that these proposals should be approved, subject only to checking that there will be sufficient accessible places of an acceptable standard available in the area to meet foreseeable demand and to accommodate the displaced pupils.

### **Academies**

4.25 Academies are publicly-funded independent schools established in partnership with business and voluntary sector sponsors. They will normally replace one or more poorly-performing schools or will meet demand for new school places in diverse communities where there is only limited access to free high quality school places. Academies may be established in rural as well as urban areas. All Academies should contribute to a strategic approach to diversity in their area. The involvement of business and other non-Government partners will enable Academies to develop and implement new approaches to governance, teaching and learning in order to raise standards. All Academies will be required to share their facilities and expertise with other local schools and the wider community.

4.26 Where an Academy is to replace an existing school or schools, the proposals for the closure of those schools should indicate whether pupils currently attending the schools will transfer to the Academy and, if appropriate, what arrangements will be made for pupils who are not expected to transfer.

4.27 If provision for pupils at a school proposed for closure is dependent on the establishment of an Academy, any approval of the closure proposals should be conditional on the Secretary of State making an agreement for an Academy (see paragraph 4.64), but there should be a general presumption in favour of approval.

### **Diversity**

4.28 The Government's aim is to transform our school system so that every child receives an excellent education – whatever their background and wherever they live. A vital part of the Government's vision is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice, where each school develops its own ethos, sense of mission and a centre of excellence or specialist provision.

4.29 Decision Makers should consider how proposals will impact on local diversity. They should consider the range of schools in the relevant area of the LA and how they will ultimately impact on the aspirations of parents and help raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.

## **Balance of Denominational Provision**

4.30 In deciding proposals to close a school with a religious character, the Decision Maker should consider the effect that this will have on the balance of denominational provision in the area.

4.31 The Decision Maker should not normally approve the closure of a school with a religious character where the proposal would result in a reduction in the proportion of denominational places in the area. This guidance does not however apply in cases where the school concerned is severely under-subscribed, standards have been consistently low or where an infant and junior school (at least one of which has a religious character) are to be replaced by a new all-through primary school with the same religious character on the site of one on the predecessor schools.

## **Every Child Matters**

4.32 The Decision Maker should consider how the proposals will help every child and young person achieve their potential in accordance with Every Child Matters' principles which are: to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution to the community and society and achieve economic well-being. This should include considering how displaced pupils will continue to have access to extended services, opportunities for personal development, access to academic and vocational training, measures to address barriers to participation and support for children and young people with particular needs e.g. looked after children or children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

## **NEED FOR PLACES**

### **Provision for Displaced Pupils**

4.33 The Decision Maker should be satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils in the area, taking into account the overall supply and likely future demand for places. The Decision Maker should consider the quality and popularity with parents of the schools in which spare capacity exists and any evidence of parents' aspirations for those schools.

### **Surplus Places**

4.34 It is important that education is provided as cost-effectively as possible. Empty places can represent a poor use of resources - resources that can often be used more effectively to support schools in raising standards. The Secretary of State wishes to encourage LAs to organise provision in order to ensure that places are located where parents want them. LAs should take action to remove empty places at schools that are unpopular with parents and which do little to raise standards or improve choice. The removal of surplus places should always support the core agenda of raising standards and respect parents' wishes by seeking to match school places with parental choices.

4.35 The Decision Maker should normally approve proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places where the school proposed for closure has a quarter or more places unfilled, and at least 30 surplus places, and where standards are low compared to standards across the LA. The Decision Maker should consider all other

proposals to close schools in order to remove surplus places carefully. Where the rationale for the closure of a school is based on the removal of surplus places, standards at the school(s) in question should be taken into account, as well as geographical and social factors, such as population sparsity in rural areas, and the effect on any community use of the premises.

## **IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND TRAVEL**

### **Impact on Community**

4.36 Some schools may already be a focal point for family and community activity, providing extended services for a range of users, and its closure may have wider social ramifications. In considering proposals for the closure of such schools, the effect on families and the community should be considered. Where the school was providing access to extended services, some provision should be made for the pupils and their families to access similar services through their new schools or other means.

4.37 The information presented by those bringing forward proposals to close such schools, particularly when they are in receipt of funding as part of regeneration activity, should therefore include evidence that options for maintaining access to extended services in the area have been addressed. The views of other relevant agencies and partnerships with responsibility for community and family services should be taken into account, alongside those of the local police, Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies having responsibility for the New Deal for Communities.

### **Community Cohesion and Race Equality**

4.38 When considering proposals to close a school the Decision Maker should consider the impact of the proposals on community cohesion. This will need to be considered on a case by case basis, taking account of the community served by the school and the views of different sections within the community. In considering the impact of the proposals on community cohesion the Decision Maker will need to take account of the nature of the alternative provision to be made for pupils displaced by the closure and the effects of any other changes to the provision of schools in the area.

### **Travel and Accessibility for All**

4.39 In considering proposals for the reorganisation of schools, Decision Makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account. Facilities are to be accessible by those concerned, by being located close to those who will use them, and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups.

4.40 In deciding statutory proposals, the Decision Maker should bear in mind that proposals should not have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable routes e.g. for walking, cycling etc. The EIA 2006 provides extended free transport rights for low income groups – see Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance ref 00373 – 2007BKT-EN at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications). Proposals should also be considered on the

basis of how they will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

### **Equal Opportunity Issues**

4.41 The Decision Maker should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed, for example, that where there is a proposed change to single sex provision in an area, there is equal access to single sex provision for the other sex to meet parental demand. Similarly there needs to be a commitment to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflects the ethnic and cultural mix of the area, while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all.

### **Rural Schools and Sites**

4.42 In considering statutory proposals to close a rural school, the Decision Maker should have regard to the need to preserve access to a local school for rural communities. There is therefore a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school should never close, but the case for closure should be strong and the proposals clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. The presumption will not apply in cases where a rural infant and junior school on the same site are being closed to establish a new primary school. In order to assist the Decision Maker, those proposing closure should provide evidence to the Decision Maker to show that they have carefully considered:

- a. Alternatives to closure including the potential for federation with another local school to increase the school's viability; the scope for an extended school or children's centre to provide local community services and facilities e.g. child care facilities, family and adult learning, healthcare, community internet access etc;
- b. The transport implications as mentioned in paragraphs 4.39 to 4.40; and
- c. The overall and long term impact on local people and the community of closure of the village school and of the loss of the building as a community facility.

4.43 When deciding proposals for the closure of a rural primary school, the Decision Maker should refer to the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) 2007 to confirm that the school is a rural school. The list of rural primary schools can be viewed on line at: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/otherdocs.shtml](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/otherdocs.shtml)

4.44 In the case of secondary schools, it is the responsibility of the Decision Maker to decide whether a school is to be regarded as rural for the purpose of considering proposals for closure under this guidance and in particular the presumption against closure. The Department's register of schools - Edubase - includes a rural/urban indicator for each school in England based on an assessment by the Office for National Statistics. The Decision Maker should have regard to this indicator. Where a school is not recorded as rural on Edubase, the Decision Maker may nonetheless wish to consider evidence provided by interested parties that a particular school should be regarded as rural.



## **TYPES OF SCHOOLS**

### **Boarding School Provision**

4.45 In making a decision on proposals to close a school that includes boarding provision, the Decision Maker should consider whether there is a state maintained boarding school within one hour's travelling distance from the school. The Decision Maker should consider whether there are satisfactory alternative boarding arrangements for those currently in the school and those who may need boarding places in the foreseeable future, including the children of service families.

## **SPECIFIC AGE PROVISION ISSUES**

### **Early Years Provision**

4.46 In considering proposals to close a school which currently includes early years provision, the Decision Maker should consider whether the alternative provision will integrate pre-school education with childcare services and/or with other services for young children and their families; and should have particular regard to the views of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

4.47 The Decision Maker should also consider whether the alternative early years provision will maintain or enhance the standard of educational provision and flexibility of access for parents. Alternative provision could be with providers in the private, voluntary or independent sector.

### **Nursery School Closures**

4.48 In deciding whether to approve any proposals to close a nursery school, the Decision Maker should be aware that nursery schools generally offer high quality provision, and have considerable potential as the basis for developing integrated services for young children and families. There should be a presumption against the closure of a nursery school unless the case for closure can demonstrate that:

- a. the LA is consistently funding numbers of empty places;
- b. full consideration has been given to developing the school into a Sure Start Children's Centre, and there are clear, justifiable grounds for not doing so, for example: unsuitable accommodation, poor quality provision and low demand for places;
- c. plans to develop alternative provision clearly demonstrate that it will be at least as equal in terms of the quantity and quality of early years provision provided by the nursery school with no loss of expertise and specialism; and that
- d. replacement provision is more accessible and more convenient for local parents.

## **14-19 Curriculum and Collaboration**

4.49 The Government has ambitious plans to increase post-16 participation rates

and improve the skills of learners. The foundation for making progress is a transformed, coherent 14-19 phase offering a rich mix of learning opportunities from which young people can choose tailored programmes and gain qualifications appropriate to their aptitudes, needs and aspirations. This will be achieved by better collaboration between local providers, including schools, colleges, training providers and employers. Decision Makers should therefore consider what measures are being proposed to ensure that opportunities available to students in this age group are not reduced by the school closure, although the absence of such measures should not prevent the closure of a poorly-performing school.

### **16-19 Provision – General**

4.50 The pattern of 16-19 provision differs across the country. Many different configurations of school and college provision deliver effective 14-19 education and training. An effective 14-19 organisation has a number of key features:

- standards and quality: the provision available should be of a high standard – as demonstrated by high levels of achievement and good completion rates;
- progression: there should be good progression routes for all learners in the area, so that every young person has a choice of the full range of options within the 14-19 entitlement, with institutions collaborating as necessary to make this offer. All routes should make provision for the pastoral, management and learning needs of the 14-19 age group;
- participation: there are high levels of participation in the local area; and,
- learner satisfaction: young people consider that there is provision for their varied needs, aspirations and aptitudes in a range of settings across the area.

4.51 Where standards and participation rates are variable, or where there is little choice, meaning that opportunity at 16 relies on where a young person went to school, the case for reorganisation, or allowing high quality providers to expand, is strong.

4.52 Where standards and participation rates are consistently high, collaboration is strong and learners express satisfaction that they have sufficient choice, the case for a different pattern of provision is less strong. The Decision Maker therefore will need to take account of the pattern of 16-19 provision in the area and the implications of approving new provision.

### **LSC Proposals to Close Inadequate 16-19 Provision**

4.53 The Learning and Skills Act 2000 (as amended by the Education Act 2005) gives the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) powers to propose the closure of 16-19 schools judged to require Special Measures. Where a 16-19 school is proposed for closure in such circumstances there should be a presumption to approve the proposals, subject to evidence being provided that the development will have a positive impact on standards.

### **Conflicting Sixth Form Reorganisation Proposals**

4.54 Where the implementation of reorganisation proposals by the LSC conflict with

other published proposals put to the Decision Maker for decision, the Decision Maker is prevented (by the School Organisation Proposals by the LSC for England Regulations 2003) from making a decision on the “related” proposals until the Secretary of State has decided the LSC proposals (see paragraphs 4.13 to 4.14 above).

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) PROVISION**

### **Initial Considerations**

4.55 When reviewing SEN provision, planning or commissioning alternative types of SEN provision or considering proposals for change, LAs should aim for a flexible range of provision and support that can respond to the special educational needs of individual pupils and parental preferences, rather than necessarily establishing broad categories of provision according to special educational need or disability. There are a number of initial considerations for LAs to take account of in relation to proposals for change. They should ensure that local proposals:

- i. take account of parental preferences for particular styles of provision or education settings;
- ii. offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise ) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of local authority day and residential special provision;
- iii. are consistent with the LA’s Children and Young People’s Plan;
- iv. take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, within a learning environment in which children can be healthy and stay safe;
- v. support the LA’s strategy for making schools and settings more accessible to disabled children and young people and their scheme for promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people ;
- vi. provide access to appropriately trained staff and access to specialist support and advice, so that individual pupils can have the fullest possible opportunities to make progress in their learning and participate in their school and community;
- vii. ensure appropriate provision for 14-19 year-olds, taking account of the role of local LSC funded institutions and their admissions policies; and
- viii. ensure that appropriate full-time education will be available to all displaced pupils. Their statements of special educational needs will require amendment and all parental rights must be ensured. Other interested partners, such as the Health Authority should be involved.

4.56 Taking account of the considerations, as set out above, will provide assurance to local communities, children and parents that any reorganisation of SEN provision in their area is designed to improve on existing arrangements and enable all children to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

### **The Special Educational Needs Improvement Test**

4.57 When considering any reorganisation of SEN provision, including that which might lead to some children being displaced through closures or alterations, LAs, and all other proposers for new schools or new provision, will need to demonstrate to parents, the local community and Decision Makers how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with special educational needs. All consultation documents and reorganisation plans that LAs publish and all relevant documentation LAs and other proposers submit to Decision Makers should show how the key factors set out in the paragraphs below (4.58 to 4.61) have been taken into account. Proposals which do not credibly meet these requirements should not be approved and Decision Makers should take proper account of parental or independent representations which question the LA's own assessment in this regard.

### **Key Factors**

4.58 When LAs are planning changes to their existing SEN provision, and in order to meet the requirement to demonstrate likely improvements in provision, they should:

- identify the details of the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of:
  - a) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment, with reference to the LA's Accessibility Strategy;
  - b) improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services;
  - c) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
  - d) improved supply of suitable places.
- LAs should also:
  - i. obtain a written statement that offers the opportunity for all providers of existing and proposed provision to set out their views on the changing pattern of provision seeking agreement where possible;
  - ii. clearly state arrangements for alternative provision. A 'hope' or 'intention' to find places elsewhere is not acceptable. Wherever possible, the host or alternative schools should confirm in writing that they are willing to receive pupils, and have or will have all the facilities necessary to provide an appropriate curriculum;
  - iii. specify the transport arrangements that will support appropriate access to the premises by reference to the LA's transport policy for SEN and disabled

children; and

- iv. specify how the proposals will be funded and the planned staffing arrangements that will be put in place.

4.59 It is to be noted that any pupils displaced as a result of the closure of a BESD school (difficulties with behavioural, emotional and social development) should not be placed long-term or permanently in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) if a special school place is what they need. PRUs are intended primarily for pupils who have been excluded, although LAs can and do use PRU provision for pupils out of school for other reasons such as illness and teenage pregnancies. There may of course be pupils who have statements identifying that they have BESD who have been placed appropriately in a PRU because they have been excluded; in such cases the statement must be amended to name the PRU, but PRUs should not be seen as an alternative long-term provision to special schools.

4.60 The requirement to demonstrate improvements and identify the specific educational benefits that flow from proposals for new or altered provision as set out in the key factors are for all those who bring forward proposals for new special schools or for special provision in mainstream schools including governors of foundation schools and foundation special schools. The proposer needs to consider all the factors listed above.

4.61 Decision Makers will need to be satisfied that the evidence with which they are provided shows that LAs and/or other proposers have taken account of the initial considerations and all the key factors in their planning and commissioning in order to meet the requirement to demonstrate that the reorganisation or new provision is likely to result in improvements to SEN provision.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **Views of interested parties**

4.62 The Decision Maker should consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them including: pupils; families of pupils; staff; other schools and colleges; local residents; diocesan bodies and other providers; LAs; the LSC (where proposals affect 14-19 provision) and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership if one exists, or any local partnership or group that exists in place of an EYDCP (where proposals affect early years and/or childcare provision). This includes statutory objections and comments submitted during the representation period. The Decision Maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the Decision Maker should give the greatest weight to representations from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals.

### **Types of Decision**

4.63 In considering proposals for a school closure the Decision Maker can decide to:

- reject the proposals;

- approve the proposals;
- approve the proposals with a modification (e.g. the school closure date); or
- approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition (see paragraph 4.64).

### **Conditional Approval**

4.64 The regulations provide for a conditional approval to be given where the Decision Maker is otherwise satisfied that the proposals can be approved, and approval can automatically follow an outstanding event. Conditional approval can only be granted in the limited circumstances specified. Conditional approval cannot be granted where proposals are decided under Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 (i.e. where there are no objections) – see paragraph 4.3 above. For school closures the following conditions can be set:

- a. the making of any agreement under section 482(1) of the 1996 Act for the establishment of an Academy, where the proposals in question provide for some or all of the pupils currently at the school which is the subject of the proposals to transfer to the Academy;
- b. the agreement to any change to admission arrangements specified in the approval, relating to another school;
- c. where the proposals depend upon conditions being met, by a specified date, for any other school or proposed school, the occurrence of such an event.

4.65 The Decision Maker **must** set a date by which the condition should be met but will be able to modify the date if the proposers confirm, before the date expires, that the condition will be met later than originally thought. The proposer should inform the Decision Maker and the Department (School Organisation Unit, DCSF, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG) or by email to [school.organisation@dcf.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@dcf.gov.uk) when a condition is met. If a condition is not met by the date specified, the proposals should be referred back to the Decision Maker for fresh consideration.

### **Decision**

4.66 All decisions **must** give reasons for the decision (i.e. irrespective of whether the proposals were rejected or approved) indicating the main factors/criteria for the decision.

4.67 A copy of the decision **must** be forwarded to:

- the person or body who published the proposals;
- each objector except where a petition has been received. Where a petition is received a decision letter should be sent to the person who submitted the petition, or where this is unknown, the signatory whose name appears first on the petition;

- the Secretary of State (via the School Organisation Unit, DCSF, Mowden Hall, Darlington DL3 9BG or by email to [school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk) );
- where the school includes provision for 14-16 education or sixth form education, the LSC;
- the local CofE diocese;
- the Bishop of the RC diocese.

4.68 Where proposals are decided by the LA a copy of the decision **must** be sent to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, Mowden Hall, Darlington DL3 9BG. Where proposals are decided by the schools adjudicator a copy of the decision **must** be sent to the LA who maintain the school.

### **Can proposals be withdrawn?**

4.69 Proposals may be withdrawn at any point before a decision is taken. Written notice should be given to the LA, or governing body, if the proposals were published by the LA. Written notice should also be sent to the schools adjudicator (if proposals have been sent to him) and the Secretary of State – i.e. via the School Organisation Unit, DCSF, Mowden Hall, Darlington DL3 9BG or by e-mail to [school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

Written notice should also be placed at the main entrance to the school, or all the entrances if there are more than one.

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