

Portslade Community College / Proposed Portslade Academy Public Meeting Notes

Meeting date **25th January 2011 at 19.30hrs**

Attendees Gil Sweetenham, Gillian Churchill, Linda Ellis, Les Howell-BHCC
Stuart McLaughlin David King, Alison Harding – Portslade Community College
Rod Aldridge, Honor Wilson-Fletcher, Sophie Gaston – The Aldridge Foundation
Councillors Vanessa Brown, , Les Hamilton and Bob Carden
Approx 80 members of the public

DK Chair of Governors of Portslade Community College gave a brief introduction.

GS gave a short presentation outlining the programme for the proposed Academy at Portslade.

HW-F gave an overview of the Academy proposal
Aldridge Foundation and Local Authority (LA) listened to outcome of previous consultation and agreed that the current head teacher will become the Principle Designate and that the sixth form will be located on the main school site.
The LA and the Aldridge Foundation are producing a joint document to secure the community elements such as the public library.

Stuart McLaughlin made the following points
The performance of the school has already started to improve and this improvement will continue but there is a need to do things differently if the rate of improvement is to increase.
The Academy proposal allows freedom to do things differently
The support of the Aldridge Foundation creates opportunities
The funding available for the Academy will allow significant investment in ICT

The floor was then opened to questions

What is the attitude of the Principle Designate towards bullying?

Bullying is not acceptable. The Academy will work with and support both sides to understand the impacts of such behaviour.

Will the uniform Change?

Yes. The new uniform will be deigned in conjunction with the pupils.

What difference will Academy status make?

The Academy will allow greater freedoms to drive improvement. The Academy will be directly responsible to the Secretary of State not the LA.

What affect will there be on the sixth form if the proposal goes ahead?

Improved facilities for the sixth form on the main school site, a curriculum that is integrated with the rest of the school, increase in the size and capacity of the sixth form.

What will happen to teaching staff and class sizes?

Staff will transfer to the new Academy unless no suitable post exists. The LA will work with staff to find suitable alternative employment but some staff may be made redundant. Class size is partly determined by budget and partly by technology. It is anticipated that class sizes will be 27 or 28 in the next academic year.

Is it true that persistent offenders can be excluded more easily from an Academy?

The Aldridge Foundation would prefer not to exclude any pupil, however they will not tolerate poor performance and will work with pupils and parents to address any issues.

Is there any necessity to have a sponsor given the government push for non sponsored academies?

New style academies without sponsors are only an option for 'outstanding' schools at the present time. It is not clear what levels of funding are available for these new style academies.

How will the disruption be managed during the change?

The school has a significant amount of surplus capacity owing to the low pupil numbers which will assist in minimising the disruption during the build period (which will be between 18 months and two years).

Parents who do not support the proposal are concerned that their voices will not be heard, is this correct?

The decision will be made by the councils Cabinet and as part of that process all representations made will be made available as will the notes from consultation meetings.

Why is it not possible to access the £12.7 million funding without converting to Academy status?

That is a government decision. Maintaining the status quo is not an option for PCC, improvements in performance are needed now.

Will there be a reduction in staffing as a result of this proposal?

The school is currently overstaffed owing to the low pupil numbers and therefore there is a need to cut staff but this is nothing to do with the Academy proposal.

Meeting closed at 21.15hrs

