

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION WITH REGARDS TO THE SUBMISSION OF AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR THE CREATION OF AN ACADEMY AT PORTSLADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (PCC)

21ST JUNE 2010

BACKGROUND

The formal EOI consultation ran from 10th May 2010 to 18th June 2010. 1,500 consultation pamphlets were issued to PCC Parents/Carers, Staff, Governors, Pupils and users supported by a detailed consultation document available on line and hard copies from the Council and PCC. The detailed consultation document was also provided to Headteachers and governing bodies of other primary, secondary and special schools in Brighton & Hove, CITY College, Varndean College and BHASVIC, Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), neighbouring Local Authorities, Church of England and Roman Catholic Diocesan Boards of Education, Ward Councillors, Trade Unions and Associations.

Public consultation meetings were held at; Portslade Community Forum (two), Portslade Youth Forum, PCC and Portslade Village Centre attended in total by about 280 people.

Notes were taken at these meetings and these reflected the genuine interest of the community in the proposal for PCC to become an academy. Present at each of the meetings were parents and community members who contributed positively to the discussion many of whom were genuinely enthused by the passion and enthusiasm of the sponsor. In particular the tenor of the meeting at Portslade Community College changed when a parent spoke up to say that she had been doubtful about the academy but was enthused by Rod's passion and believed this would be good for the school. This was then followed by more support from others. Lots of parents waited to meet and discuss with Rod and Honor at the end of the meeting.

Also present at these meetings were representatives of groups who oppose academies in principle. With one or two exceptions the majority of these representatives were from outside of the Portslade Community and many from outside of the area all together.

It was also evident at each meeting that there is considerable support for the changes being made at the school at present and many comments regarding the successful early period of the recently appointed Headteacher.

RESPONSES

A total of 86 written responses were received, 4 of these were received after the closing date but have been included for completeness.

The overwhelming response, both written and at the public consultation meetings, was to recognise that change was needed at the school and to recognise and support the positive signs of improvement being seen already as a result of the actions being taken by the new Headteacher.

In summary:

- A number of written responses directly supported the need for the change and investment that an Academy would bring. This included the Mile Oak Women's Institute and Brighton & Hove Colleges' Accord
- The PCC Board of Governors written response recognised the need for change and wished to be fully involved in the process of PCC becoming an academy. The governing body highlighted a number of areas they would like included in the development plans for the academy.
- The proposal for an academy at PCC was opposed directly by the Green Party and the National Union of Teachers who both felt that academies in general remained unproven with regard to raising standards at low achieving schools. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers raised a number of concerns and challenges as to the creation of an Academy.
- The Secondary Head Teachers of Brighton & Hove requested that more time and research is given to secure funding and improve standards

There were a range of other comments supporting the changes already being made and contrasting this with the need for an academy. Although the community was largely supportive of the present changes there was concern raised about standards of behaviour and achievement at the school.

A number of technical elements were raised as concerns such as traffic safety, disruption to student's studies during transition/construction, fear of losing community facilities and cohesion, and anxiety over the City having a second academy. The majority of these concerns were addressed at the public meetings and responses given identifying the process through the outline business case wherein detailed provision for addressing these elements would be given.