



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

**CABINET
ADDENDUM
Second Pack**

4.00PM, THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2008

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

ADDENDUM

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CABINET

Agenda Item 90

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Update and outcome of the formal consultation stage for the proposed Falmer Academy		
Date of Meeting:	16 October 2008		
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Lorraine O'Reilly	Tel: 294226
		Gil Sweetenham	293474
	E-mail:	lorraine.o'reilly@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
		gil.sweetenham@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No. CAB3342	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) was that the statutory consultation period required under Government guidance for the determination of the Statutory Notice closed on 13th October, therefore after the deadline for reports to Cabinet.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 In line with the Council's policy to ensure that all pupils are given every opportunity to excel, this report updates Members on the process for the proposed development of an Academy on the Falmer High School site. The report informs Members of the outcomes of the statutory consultation process and seeks approval to determine the closure of the Falmer High School in August 2010 to enable the opening of the Falmer Academy in September 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Cabinet note the progress since the Cabinet Report of 10th July 2008.

2.2 That the Cabinet consider the outcome of the statutory stage of consultation undertaken between 1 September and 13 October 2008.

2.3 That taking into account the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the statutory guidance contained in the DCSF document entitled 'Closing of a Maintained Mainstream School – A Guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies' and the responses to consultation, the Cabinet conditionally approve to close Falmer

High School on 31st August 2010 to enable the immediate opening of Falmer Academy on 1st September 2010. This approval is conditional upon the making of an agreement under Section 482(1) of the Education Act 1996 for the establishment of an Academy. This condition must be met by 31st January 2009.

- 2.4 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services to submit the Outline Business Case (OBC) to the DCSF to enable the project to move into the Implementation Stage.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Following the submission of the Expression of Interest in April 2008 and having received ministerial approval in early May 2008, the Council undertook the consultation process on the future of Falmer High School. This consultation was undertaken between 19 May and 4 July 2008 and was reported to Cabinet on 10th July 2008. It was then resolved to proceed to the publication of Statutory Notices for the closure of the school. Notices were published on 1 September 2008 and a statutory 'representation' period of 6 weeks then followed. This concluded on 13th October 2008. Any representations received are set out at paragraph 4 below.
- 3.2 The proposal to develop the Falmer Academy forms part of the Government's programme to develop 400 Academies of which 130 are now open or in development. Announced recently are proposals for two Academies in Hastings sponsored by Brighton University and co-sponsored by British Telecom. Plans are also being considered for Shoreham, Littlehampton and Poole.
- 3.3 The proposed Academy's development is currently in the second of four stages of development. This stage is the Feasibility Stage. During the Feasibility Stage, detailed consideration is given to the curriculum and physical development of the Academy to ensure that there is validity in the proposal moving to the third stage of the process, the Implementation Stage. It is expected that the Falmer Academy project will move into the Implementation Stage by the end of November but by no later than 31 January 2009.
- 3.4 Moving to the implementation stage will represent a significant move forward in the process and will realign the timetable instigated in February 2006 for the Academy opening in September 2010.
- 3.5 In addition to undertaking the Statutory Consultation, the following further progress has been made:
 - 3.5 1 Positive detailed negotiations with Partnerships for Schools have resulted in their approval of the Options Appraisal for the site (a copy of the Options Appraisal document of 30 pages is available in the Members' Library).

- 3.5.2 The siting of the Academy and the phasing of its construction means that the Bridge Centre can remain in its current location until at least 2012, after which they could move to new purpose built accommodation in the proposed community stadium. The Trustees of the Bridge Centre have expressed their appreciation of the work that has been undertaken on their behalf to secure a long term capital future for the centre.
- 3.5.3 Similarly the Daisy Chain nursery is able to remain in its current location and their lease has been extended for a further two years. The Huggles Nursery's lease has been extended to May 2009.
- 3.5.4 The Swan Centre which will remain as Council wide provision, for the same number of pupils, and continue to be funded by the Council can continue to operate with no disruption until it is relocated in new purpose built accommodation, funded by the Council, housed within the Academy.
- 3.5.5 The monthly Staff Engagement Group, that now forms part of the governance structure, has commenced with over 20 Falmer staff taking part in positive discussions about the future curriculum and organisation of the school. Staff surgeries are held every Monday afternoon at the school and are welcomed. Future activities for the staff, pupils, governors and parents include a visit to a London Academy in November and to the Aldridge Foundation Academy in Darwen in December, further meetings of the Partnership Board in November and January and the formation of the Parents Council in January.
- 3.5.6 The students of Falmer High School have been actively expressing their desires for the proposed Academy and have made a DVD/film expressing these. The film can be accessed from the home page of the proposed Academy's website www.proposedfalmeracademy.org. The pupils have also written a booklet about the proposed Academy which has been given to all pupils, parents and prospective parents. An "Oscars" celebration with the Sponsor, staff and pupils took place on 15th October.
- 3.5.7 Meetings of the Staff Engagement, Education, Community Engagement and Design Groups continue throughout the Feasibility Stage and into the Implementation Stage as do discussions with unions and their representatives. Discussions have also been held with the 14-19 Learning Partnership Board which represents all secondary schools, FE colleges and adult provision in the City and with the four main feeder primary schools (Moulsecoomb, Bevendean, Coldean and Coombe Road). A presentation will be given at the Governors' Briefing meeting and also at the Primary Heads meeting in November.
- 3.5.8 A proposed Falmer Academy website has been established to provide information and to answer some of the common questions from parents and members of the community. Newsletters and information about the website have been widely distributed in the Falmer area.

3.5.9 The Project Initiation Document has been submitted and approved by the DCSF in line with the conditions set out in Lord Adonis' letter of 7th May 2008, thus resulting in further Government support to the project.

3.5.10 Members of the Children & Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee were updated at the meeting of 24th September where a number of questions were asked and clarified.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation on the closure of a school must follow the processes set out in sections 15-16 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and the statutory guidance issued by the DCSF. Section 16(2) of the Act provides that before publishing any proposals for closure of a community school, the Council must have consulted 'such persons as appear to them to be appropriate'. This consultation was carried out between 19 May and 4 July 2008.
- 4.2 On 10 July 2008 Cabinet authorised the Director of Children's Services to proceed to publish the required statutory notices for the closure of the school. The subsequent 6 week representation period was the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposals. Statutory notices were subsequently published in the local newspaper on 1st September and appeared on the Council's website. In addition, 34 Notices were displayed in 30 locations across the City. See Appendix 3. The Statutory Notice stated where additional information on the closure proposal could be obtained. Only one enquiry was made.
- 4.3 The Statutory Notice forms part of the full proposal. Copies of the full proposal were sent to the Anglican and Catholic diocese, the governing body of Falmer High School, East and West Sussex County Councils, the Learning and Skills Council and the DCSF. In addition to this all head teachers in the city were informed of the publication of the Statutory Notice and given details informing them how they could obtain a copy of the full proposal. No requests were received for a copy of the full proposal.
- 4.4 The proposed Academy's website also carried information on the consultation and provided an interactive question and answer facility. No enquiries on the consultation have been received. Reference to the consultation was included in 20,000 proposed Academy newsletters which were distributed on a monthly basis to all households in the Moulsecoomb, Bevendean and Coldean wards. These newsletters were also distributed to the parents of pupils at Falmer High School and all the parents of pupils at the four main feeder primary schools.
- 4.5 Nationally the Green Party and a number of unions are opposed to the government's Academies programme and have formed the National Anti Academy Alliance (AAA). The AAA has recently distributed its first national newsletter. The Brighton branch of the Alliance has distributed a local newsletter. It is believed that 3000 local AAA newsletters were distributed. The newsletter carried a proforma

letter addressed to the Lead Member for Children's Services expressing concern (but not objecting to the proposal) and requesting that a ballot of parents be undertaken and encouraging the return of such. Five of these letters have been received although it is not possible to validate the origination or authenticity of two of them.

4.6 To ensure that the local community were fully informed about the proposal and the consultation, presentations and discussions have been held with:

4.6.1 Local Action Team in Moulsecoomb on two occasions on 11th June and 9th July. The group has representatives from residents committees, community workers, the Working Together project, Sussex Police, the Community Safety Team, Sussex and Brighton universities and local residents. At both meetings the Local Action Team has been unanimously in favour of the proposal.

4.6.2 The Action for Bevendean Committee. This group represents local residents, disability groups, tenants associations, residents groups, ward councillors and the Community Development Trust. At its meeting on 22nd September, the Group voted overwhelmingly in favour of the proposal.

4.6.3 On two occasions, the proposed Academy has been discussed and considered by the Focal People's Group hosted by the Vicar of St Andrews. The meetings have been attended by the MP Des Turner and his wife, representatives from Sussex Police, the Trust for Developing Community Youth Work, City College, the Living without Violence project, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and Youth Service, Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club, ward councillors, the Women's Refuge Project, Brighton University and the Action for Bevendean Committee. The Academy proposal was the featured item at the meeting on 3rd September where the proposal gained universal support.

4.6.4 The Swan Centre is also in support of the proposal and a new Service Level Agreement has been agreed until August 2010 when a new agreement will be issued.

4.6.5 At meetings held with each of the four main feeder primary schools (Bevendean, Moulsecoomb, Coldean and Coombe Road), each headteacher was in support of the proposed Academy's development.

4.7 Both Brighton and Sussex Universities have further considered their support of the proposed Academy at board level and have reiterated their commitment. Brighton University has recently announced its sponsorship of two Academies in Hastings.

4.8 The Council is required to consult a number of bodies as part of the statutory process (see 4.3). No objections to the proposal have been forthcoming from these bodies. At a meeting of the Governing body of Falmer High School held on

29th September 2008 to specifically discuss the Academy's development, the Governing body again stated their support for the proposal.

4.9 In addition to the endorsements given by the three community representation groups detailed above, one of which has been confirmed in writing, eight statements of support have been received from Brighton and Sussex universities, City College, the Learning & Skills Council, the 14-19 Learning Partnership Board and from the four main feeder primary schools. The Sussex County Cricket Club and Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club have also written as has the Director of Children's Services in her role as Statutory Officer. Copies are shown as Appendix 4.

4.10 In all cases where an Academy is proposed, the Prime Minister's office opens an on-line e-petition. The site received 207 names against the file heading

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to stop the closure of Falmer High School in Brighton & Hove and hold a ballot to decide if an Academy is what the community wants".

The DCSF responded in length on 8th October. A full copy is shown as Appendix 5. The following extract is the most pertinent to the Cabinet's considerations:

"Once closure consultation has been completed and responses considered, the Council will then make a final decision in October as to whether to approve the closure proposal. As happens with most Academy proposals, any closure decision will be subject to the Academy then being given approval to go ahead by the DCSF Ministers. We currently expect Ministers to be able to decide the Falmer Academy Funding Agreement proposal in late October or shortly afterwards, but subject to the Feasibility Stage having been successfully completed, and the necessary legal, educational and other steps having been taken".

The petition is included here in the spirit of openness and completeness.

4.11 Five proforma letters (see 4.6) were received by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. These letters were not submitted in accordance with the laid down statutory process. However, since the letters were received during the period that the Notice was in force, they have been considered as representations to that Notice.

4.12 Two further proforma letters were received after the end of the 6 week statutory consultation period. These letters have not therefore been considered as representations to the Notice and mention is made of these here in the spirit of openness and completeness.

4.13 Objections to the proposal were received from three parents of prospective pupils.

- 4.14 An objection was received by the Green Party after the end of the statutory six week consultation period. Mention is made of this objection in the spirit of openness and completeness.
- 4.15 In summary, nine representations have been received in support and eight against the proposal. Copies of all representations are appended as Appendix 6.
- 4.16 The level of representations is extremely low for a consultation of this size and considering the balance of views expressed and from whom those views have been expressed, it is recommended that Recommendation 2.3 of this report is enacted.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

- 5.1.1 The capital cost of the Academy will be met by the DCSF. Negotiations continue with Partnerships for Schools to determine the exact amount as the outcome of the Options Appraisal is known. Allocated funding from the DCSF currently stands at £26.2m. This funding is only available within the Academy programme. It is not transferable to Falmer High School, the BSF programme or other schools in the City.
- 5.1.2 The next stage of the process to develop the Academy is the approval of the Outline Business Case. The approval enables the Funding Agreement to be signed by the Chief Executive of Brighton & Hove City Council and the Secretary of State, thus enabling the procurement of the design and build contract to commence and the recruitment of the Principal Designate to proceed.
- 5.1.3 The revenue budget for the Academy will be based on the existing Falmer High School budget and be finalised nearer the time.
- 5.1.4 In line with the Minister's condition, the Project Initiation Document was re-submitted and recently approved by Partnerships for Schools on 30th August 2008. This approval confirms release of grant funding through the Standards Fund to ensure appropriate development of the project in the early stages.

Finance Officer Consulted: Catherine Vaughan

Date: July 2008

5.2 Legal Implications:

- 5.2.1 Statutory notices were published on 1st September 2008 in accordance with Section 15(1) of the 2006 Act and the accompanying School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, (“the Regulations”). The statutory six week period for representations to be made followed. The closing date for receipt of representations or objections was 13th October 2008.
- 5.2.2 Paragraphs 7 – 8 and 19 of Schedule 2 to EIA 2006 set out who should decide proposals. In the case of this proposal the decision is to be taken by the LA. However there is provision for some rights of appeal to the schools adjudicator.
- 5.2.3 The DCSF does not prescribe the process by which an LA carries out their decision-making function. This is a matter for the LA to determine but the requirement to have regard to statutory guidance applies equally to the body or individual that takes the decision. In this instance Cabinet will act as the Decision Maker for the Local Authority.
- 5.2.4 DCSF Guidance entitled ‘Closing a maintained mainstream school,’ provides that there are 4 key issues which the Decision Maker should consider before judging the respective factors and merits of the statutory proposals:
- a Is any information missing? If so, the Decision Maker should write immediately to the proposer/promoter specifying a date by which the information must be provided.
 - b Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements?
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 Regulations, it may be judged invalid and the Decision Maker should consider whether they can decide the proposals. In this instance legal advice has confirmed that the notice did comply with the statutory requirements.
 - c Has the statutory consultation been carried out prior to the publication of the notice? Details of the consultation should be included in the proposals. The Decision Maker should be satisfied that the consultation meets statutory requirements (see paragraphs 1.2 to 1.6 of the DCSF guidance). 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 yet 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.

d Are the proposals linked or related to other published proposals?

The proposal to close Falmer High School is linked to the proposal to open an Academy on the same site the following day. If the Proposal to proceed with the Academy should fail for any reason the proposal to close Falmer High School will not be implemented.

5.2.5 A full copy of the DCSF guidance 'Closing a Maintained Mainstream school' is in the Members room. Paragraphs 4.15 to 4.62 of the Guidance set out the factors which must be considered by Decision Makers when determining a statutory proposal.

5.2.6 In considering proposals for a school closure the Decision Maker can decide to:

Reject the proposal

Approve the proposal

Approved the proposal with modifications

Approve the proposal subject to them meeting a specific condition

The Regulations provide that conditional approvals can only be given where the Decision Maker is otherwise satisfied that the proposals can be approved, and approval can automatically follow an outstanding event. In the case of this proposal approval would be conditional upon the making of an agreement under Section 482 (1) of the Education Act 1996 for the establishment of an Academy.

5.2.7 All decisions must give reasons for the decision indicating the main factors / criteria for the decision, irrespective of whether the proposals were rejected or approved, Section 7 of this report gives the reasons for the decision based on the legislative framework within which the proposal must be decided.

Lawyer Consulted Serena Kynaston

Date: October 2008

5.3 Equalities Implications:

5.3.1 Young people leaving Falmer High School are presently the highest group in the City in terms of Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) being 11.6% in 2007, almost double the 6.2% average for the City. Although the figures for pupils undertaking further education have increased over the past few years, this rate in 2007 at 63% is lower than other schools in the City where sixth form provision is provided in the school environment. It is therefore hoped that over time, provision of the sixth form will increase the number of pupils fully engaged in post-16 education widening

participation of the young people in this area of the City in further education thus improving the very high number of adults in the area who have no formal qualifications, currently 37.61%.

5.3.2 GCSE Exam results (non-validated 2008) for Falmer High School show improvement in the overall GCSE results 5 A*-C, improving from 30% to 41%. However, when taking into account Maths and English, A-C grades fell from 24% to 19%. Provisional value added results, using Fisher Family Trust analysis, show improvement to 1031, meaning that Falmer High School remains as one of the highest value added schools.

5.3.3 Falmer High School was identified in the Minister's announcement on 10th June as one of the 638 schools who have not met the national requirement to reach 30% A-C grades and is therefore part of the National Challenge programme. The Children & Young Peoples Trust has submitted an Action Plan for consideration to the DCSF in relation to an improvement strategy. The development of the Academy in such circumstances is accepted by Government as an appropriate option for significant improvement.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

5.4.1 The construction of the proposed Academy will adhere to DCSF guidelines (Building Bulletin 98) and will be in line with stringent new targets issued by the Government in March 2008 to reduce school carbon footprints to 60% for all new school buildings. Thus the proposed new building will take full advantage of all appropriate environmentally sustainable energy and recycling systems including proposals for ground source heat pumps, green roofs and solar gain. The final design must meet the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Model (BREEAM) standard at either Good or Excellent. The Outline Planning application approved on 18 June 2008 reaches the BREEAM Excellent standard. Thus the proposed Academy will be a flagship for environmentally sustainable schools for Brighton & Hove for the future and will be one of the "greenest" buildings in the City.

5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.5.1 A Risk Register has been compiled and a full Risk Workshop was held on 3rd September 2008. Full consideration of risks is undertaken at every Project Steering Group meeting.

5.6 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.6.1 The development of an Academy on the Falmer High School site is in accord with the DCSF's policy on developing a range of schools in each Local Authority thereby increasing the variety of types of school available to parents.

5.7 Crime & Disorder Implications

5.7.1 Throughout the development of the proposed Academy, consultation with both community groups and the Community Safety team and police liaison officers will take place. Sussex Police Service endorse the view that the engagement of the community in the use of the facilities at the Academy and with the availability of those facilities outside normal school hours, it is envisaged that crime and disorder in the local area will be reduced, as will the numbers of pupils not in education, employment or training (NEET).

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)

- 6.1 Officers and the Lead Member of the CYPT have considered the alternatives to improve not only the outcome for pupils (which have improved considerably over the last few years but which fall short of the 30% benchmark for GCSEs when including English and Maths) and the possibility of rebuilding the current school.
- 6.2 As Falmer High School comes within the National Challenge Programme, the CYPT submitted an Action Plan for Improvement. The development of the Academy in such circumstances is accepted by Government as an appropriate option for significant improvement.
- 6.3 The Council does not enter the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme until 2015. Although the DCSF recently announced a reconsideration of the programme, they have also made clear that local authorities would be expected to widen parental choice and take action to develop Academies, Trust or Federated Schools. Given this, the improvements at Falmer High School so far and the uncertainty of any future BSF programme, officers consider that the Academy offers the best option for the pupils and the local community and the site.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that the proposals to close Falmer High School are approved subject to the condition that an agreement under Section 482 (1) of the Education Act 1996 is made for the establishment of an Academy on the same site. This agreement must be made by 31st January 2009. The signing of the Funding Agreement effectively constitutes this agreement.
- 7.2 The proposal to close Falmer High School is inextricably linked to the proposal to open an Academy on the same site the following day. Consequently the Academy proposal is instrumental in the factors to be considered in determining the closure proposal.

- 7.3 The Academy proposal will afford significant capital investment in the school which will enable the development of the curriculum going forward. This will contribute to raising standards at the school improving attainment for children and young people.
- 7.4 The setting up of an Academy on the site of Falmer High school will contribute to a strategic approach to diversity in choice for secondary education within the city.
- 7.5 The Academy will offer a focal point for the community providing a range of extended services to all ages. The Academy will encourage business and community participation in all types of events and activities.
- 7.6 The Academy will adhere to the Councils admissions arrangements which is based on catchment areas. This provides a truly local school which serves its most immediate community and assists in the aspirations of the Local Authority in terms of green travel arrangements.
- 7.7 The proposed Academy will have an on site sixth form which Falmer High school does not currently provide. This will enable students to access a coherent and exciting 14 to 19 curriculum offer. It is believed that this will encourage more young people to take up the opportunity for further and higher education.
- 7.8 Falmer High School currently hosts the Swan centre. This is a valuable and successful facility for young people on the Autistic spectrum. This facility will be housed within the Academy in new purpose built accommodation so there will be no loss of provision as a result of these proposals.
- 7.9 There has been a wide ranging consultation with the school, stakeholders and the wider community. The results of the pre statutory notice consultation is included in the full proposal and shows that on balance there is support for the proposals.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Revised Governance Structure
2. Statutory Notice
3. Locations of the Statutory Notice
4. Summary statements of support for the Academy
5. DCSF response to the e-petition
6. Representations.

Documents In Members' Rooms

- 1 The full proposal including
 - a) The Expression of Interest
 - b) Informal Stage consultation documents and responses
2. Closing a Maintained Mainstream School – A guide for Local Authorities and Governing bodies
3. Representations received to the Formal Consultation Period
4. The full Outline Business Case
5. The Terms of Reference for all groups within the Governance Structure
6. The Options Appraisal Document

Background Documents

1. Policy and Resources Committee paper: Development of an academy on the Falmer School site – 7 February 2008
2. Policy and Resources Committee paper: Update and Expression of Interest for an Academy on the Falmer school site – 6 March 2008
3. Cabinet Paper: Consultation on the Future of Falmer High School and the proposals for the development of an academy on the school site – 10th July 2008.

FALMER **ACADEMY**

IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR AN ACADEMY

This form should be used alongside the following documents, which are available from the Department for Children, Schools and Families website (www.dcsf.gov.uk) or from your Expression of Interest Consultant.

1. The Expression of Interest Guidance (* = Please refer to guidance)
2. *Establishing an Academy: Sponsor Guidelines*
3. *Delivering Academy Buildings through PFS*

Section 1: Executive Summary

Please provide a brief summary of the project:

The proposed Falmer Academy is a 1150, 6 form entry, 11-18, co-educational school which will replace the current Falmer High School (11-16) and will be built on part of the existing school site. The Academy will have an admission number of 180 and a sixth form of 250.

The Sponsor, Rod Aldridge, is committed to creating an outstanding Academy that is comprehensive, secular, fully inclusive and which reflects the needs and develops the aspirations of its school community. It will be an active member of the local family of 9 secondary schools, as well as working in an integrated and complimentary way with its 4 main feeder primary schools.

The Falmer school serves a highly disadvantaged area of the City and is an amalgamation of a former Grammar and Secondary Modern school. The area served by the Academy has the highest level of free school meals (FSM) with 37.48% in May 2007 and 37.6% in January 2008, significantly above the national average of 13.6%. In 2006, 54% of pupils went on to full time education. In 2007, this rose to 63% but remains 18% below the average in Brighton & Hove. NEET figures for 2007 are 10.9%, almost double the 5.7% average in the City putting it as the top NEET school in the City.

The school's intake is both comprehensive and diverse serving a predominantly white working class indigenous community, 6.2% of pupils have English as a second language. Over the last four years, the school has made considerable progress with GCSE results improving from 21% (5 A*-C) in 2003 to 36% in 2006. The school's CVA score is good at 1017, however,

results including English & Maths were 16% in 2005, 18% in 2006 and 25% in 2007, well below the Local Authority and National averages. The new admissions system and improvements in the performance of feeder primary schools, together with the school's value added score, show promising signs for significant improvement in the future.

The school has 48% of pupils with records of SEN and 2.9% of pupils with statements, significantly above the City's 1.9%. Of the 16 pupils attending the Council's Swan Centre, which is based on the school site, 12 are currently from the Falmer catchment area with this figure to rise to 14 by September 2010. This unit will transfer to the Academy and the Local Authority will cover the cost of its Capital and Revenue funding. The Academy will provide for its SEN pupil population with a strong emphasis on Speech and Language, this being the predominant barrier to accessing the curriculum.

The school's catchment area is formed almost entirely of one ward. This ward is in the top 10% for deprivation nationally and is amongst the highest in the City. 90% of pupils at the school are drawn from this catchment area. 7% of the remainder also come from wards in the 10% most deprived wards. The new catchment area admission arrangements implemented in 2008/09 means that the percentage of pupils drawn from the catchment area is predicted to rise to approximately 98%. The school's current capacity is 1055 pupils and there are 657 currently on roll.

The school is situated on the outskirts of the City backing on to railway lines, the A270 and A27. It shares some semi rural aspects and faces a range of housing, community and travel challenges. A particular issue relates to the local community, its confidence and aspirations. There are high numbers of one parent families and over 35% of the local community have no formal qualifications. 18% of households are lone parent, double that of the rest of Brighton & Hove.

The Academy will offer the curriculum and impetus to provide new energy and direction in raising educational achievements and expectations for the Falmer area. With specialisms of Entrepreneurship and Sport, the Academy will act as a major catalyst to further educational improvement by providing an exciting, stimulating and challenging environment in which all pupils will be expected to excel and to reach their maximum potential.

The curriculum for the proposed new Falmer Academy has been designed to redress the lack of aspiration and to challenge under achievement. The post-16 curriculum is particularly important, the Academy will provide an effective mix of both vocational and academic qualifications. Its sixth form will be self sufficient, with attractive progression routes, it is hoped that joint working with City College will enhance the curriculum and provide a wide ranging offer for this area of the City.

Additionally, the Academy will work closely with, and be enhanced by, its position within the Brighton & Hove Academic Corridor. Thus, the Academy will benefit from interactive working relationships with Brighton and Sussex

Universities, City College and Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club. Their strong support is demonstrated in letters of support from each institution which we append to this Expression of Interest. Further work needs to be undertaken during feasibility to examine the exact role that each partner can play in adding value to the Academy's offer.

The Academy will create a centre of excellence offering education and lifelong learning opportunities, not just for pupils but for parents, staff and the wider Falmer school community. The overarching aim is to unlock the potential in every pupil through the chosen specialisms of Entrepreneurship and Sport. The imaginative and innovative curriculum planned for the Academy will be delivered in a specifically designed state-of-the-art environment. The Academy is also keen to explore the Studio Schools methodology which will be considered fully during the feasibility stage. An Entrepreneurial Centre of excellence will provide the focus for the Academy's specialism and promote business and vocational education. The Academy will provide specialist facilities for technology associated subjects, the expressive and performing arts, sciences, business and Information Communication Technology (ICT) and work-related learning. The Academy will encourage applications for use by local small businesses, business start-ups, social enterprises, charities and community groups.

The chosen specialism for the Falmer Academy is 'entrepreneurship'. This one specialism will pervade the curriculum at all levels - drawing on local expertise in Brighton & Hove, and preparing pupils for possible employment with established business both large and small or as sole traders or employers themselves. The expertise and experience gained at the Darwen Aldridge Academy is also showing benefit particularly in the more academic areas of Maths, English and Science and this will be brought to the Falmer Academy. Embedding entrepreneurship across all aspects of the curriculum will allow pupils to naturally progress towards shaping their own futures. Pupils will be encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for all aspects of their lives. This will create an understanding of how to challenge and influence society rather than accept what circumstances dictate.

The specialism also includes social entrepreneurship through which an individual will examine what it means to be a part of a community and to work with partners to develop that community. It will also focus on understanding about the rights an individual has in society and also the obligations of citizenship that go with these rights. The Academy will operate extended hours to ensure that there will be a wide range of subjects on offer to all members of the Falmer school community.

As its second specialism, the Academy will place a major emphasis on sport, widening the participation of all pupils in sporting activity and encouraging them to naturally adopt a more energetic lifestyle. The development of new sports facilities at the Academy will be designed to complement both existing provision (in the Universities) and new sports provision planned for the local area.

It is intended that the Academy will open in September 2009 in the existing buildings, although we will look at this very carefully during feasibility to ensure that it is feasible and suitable for the school. The Academy will be procured using the National Framework procurement process. It is anticipated that the construction of new buildings will start in 2009 and be completed by Summer 2011. The site is reasonably large and there are a number of options for the location of the buildings and how their construction will be phased. The Local Authority will work with PfS and the Sponsor during feasibility to develop an Options Appraisal. This will allow a solution to be identified which delivers a good balance of value for money and minimising pupil disruption. The outcomes of the Appraisal will determine the exact opening date.

The Academy will have the following features:

- a stimulating learning environment in which every member of the school matters, in which everybody can learn and succeed;
- a key commitment to significantly raise the standards of literacy and numeracy for all pupils;
- high standards of behaviour and positive relationships between pupils and staff;
- the development of innovative strategies for motivating pupils and raising aspirations both within the school and the local community;
- specialism in entrepreneurship and a second specialism in sport that will provide additional and alternative learning experiences;
- a good academic/vocational balance, with full coverage of the four core National Curriculum subjects;
- an 11-18 age range with innovative partnerships with local schools, colleges, the two universities and Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club;
- the promotion of confident learners through personalised learning;
- use of the core personal development and performance ethos to deliver improvements in teaching and learning and raise standards;
- a modern, efficient approach to its organisation and the management of learning
- state of the art facilities and equipment
- the widest possible access to Academy facilities for the local community.

1.2 Key statistics

1. Predecessor School – Educational Attainment						
	GCSE 5 A*-C 2004	GCSE 5 A*-C 2005	GCSE 5 A*-C 2006	GCSE 5 A*-C 2007	GCSE 2006 (inc E + M)	GCSE 2007 (inc E + M)
National Average	53.7%	56.3%	58.5%	62.0%	45.3%	46.8%
LA Average	49.5 %	55.0 %	55.3 %	57.4 %	41.8 %	43.5 %
School	23 %	31 %	36 %	30 %	18 %	24 %

2. Predecessor School – Deprivation			
	Pupils drawn from the bottom % of the most deprived wards in the country	School situated in the bottom % of the most deprived wards in the country	% pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
National Average	-	-	13.6 %
LA Average	-	-	14.8 %
School	10 %	10 %	28.4 %

3. Predecessor School – Basic Characteristics						
	Pupils on Roll (3-11)	Pupils on Roll (11-16)	Pupils on Roll (16-19)	School Capacity	% pupils with statement of SEN	% pupils with EAL
National Average	-	-	-	-	2.2%	9.5%
LA Average	-	-	-	-	1.9 %	6.4 %
School	-	657	-	1055	2.9 %	6.2 %

4. Proposed Academy – Basic Characteristics					
	Planned number of pupils (3-11)	Planned number of pupils (11-16)	Planned number of pupils (16-19)	Planned maximum number	Specialism(s)
Academy	N/A	900	250	1150	Entrepreneurship & Sport
	Opening Date	New Build Date	Building Route	Faith Design- ation	Sponsor(s)
Academy	2009 (TBC)	2011	PfS	N/A	Mr Rodney Aldridge

Section 2: The Predecessor School (s)

2.1 Will the Academy replace a school (or schools)? Yes No

If Yes, go to Section 2.2. If No, go to Section 3.1 Please select:

2.2 Basic Characteristics

School Name: Falmer High School

School Address: Lewes Road, Brighton, BN1 9PW

Local Authority: Brighton & Hove (LA Code: 846)

Type of Establishment: **Community School** (if other please specify)

Gender: **Co-Educational**

Age range: 11-16

Is this a designated Faith School: **No** (Faith:)

Specialism(s) (if applicable): None

2.3 School Population

Admissions Number: 211

Current number of pupils on roll as at: October 2007

Yr 7: 127 Yr 8: 140 Yr 9: 146 Yr 10: 108 Yr 11: 136

Number of Year 7 pupils admitted in:

September 2003: 116

September 2004: 146

September 2005: 143

September 2006: 133

Number of Year 12-13 students at the school in:

September 2003: N/A

September 2004: N/A

September 2005: N/A

September 2006: N/A

Percentage of pupil population who joined or left the school other than at the start or finish of the academic year in:

2003: 18.8%
 2004: 19.7%
 2005: 22.8%
 2006: 21.6%

2.4 Admissions

A copy of the current Admissions Policy is attached. Mark if agree

2.5 Leadership

Name of Head teacher: Stuart McLaughlin

Head teacher has been in post for: 4 Year(s) 8 Months

2.6 School Improvement

Intervention status: **Please select**

Please provide details: N/A

Does the predecessor school receive any external support and/or is in receipt of a tailored external support package? Yes No

If yes, please provide details: Falmer School was part of an Education Action Zone prior to 2003 and since January 2004 the school has been part of an Excellence Cluster involving two other secondary schools and 13 primary schools. In addition to Gifted and Talented Provision and learning mentors, the tailored strand focussed on improving attitudes to learning. From September 2005 the cluster part of BIP has created an off-site base to provide alternative education from day one of an exclusion.

Over the last four years, the school has made considerable progress with GCSE results improving from 21% (5 A*-C) in 2003 to 36% in 2006. The school expects results to break the 40% level this year.

Other areas in which the school has improved over the last few years are:

- In 2007, the school's 5+A*-C including Maths and English improved by 8% to 25%
- In 2006, the school's CVA was the second best in the City (1017)
- Recent OfSTED inspections acknowledge the improvement the school is making

- 98% to 100% achieving at least one pass over the past three years
- In addition to the school's improvement trend, two further factors give an indication that significant improvement will be possible in the future. Firstly, the new admissions system has seen the number of first preferences rise this year by 43 to 124. However, 77 pupils from within the catchment area did not put Falmer School as a preference. It is reasonable to presume that the families of these pupils who chose schools outside the Falmer catchment area are the more motivated and aspirational parents. As the admissions system beds down (and particularly when the Academy opens) it is expected that this group of families will choose Falmer school. In addition, there are currently 28 children from within the catchment area who attend other schools due to the use of the sibling criteria. The sibling criteria will cease in 2012. Therefore, the aspirations and ability range of the pupil population is expected to improve.
- The second factor is the improvement in the performance of the four feeder primary schools. These schools have been the focus of an intensive support programme by the Local Authority and their results show good improvement rates. For example, at one of the feeder primary schools, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ at KS2 in English, Maths & Science has increased by 9%, 16% and 24% respectively since 2005 and those achieving Level 5 in the same subjects has increased by 4%, 13% and 21% over the same period. Therefore, the prior attainment and improvement potential of the pupils entering the Academy is substantially improving.

The Academy will act as a catalyst to further improvement providing an exciting, stimulating and challenging environment in which all pupils will be expected to excel and to reach their maximum potential.

Please provide details of the school's involvement in any local collaborative arrangements, such as Excellence in Cities:

From September 2003 the school has benefited from working with others funded and supported by the Leadership Incentive Grant. The school receives support from the National Strategies consultants to support the professional development of staff and the development of a good climate for learning. The school also receives funding to provide appropriate intervention for those pupils who need additional support to make good progress.

2.7 Finance

Does the predecessor school currently have a budget deficit?* Yes No

If yes, please provide details:

Does the predecessor school currently have an in year deficit? Yes No

If yes, please provide details of the LA's plan to reduce the deficit:

Section 3: The Proposed Academy

3.1 Academy Population

Planned Maximum Number: 1150

Gender: **Co-Educational**

Forms of Entry: 6

Admissions Number: 180

Primary and Pre-School

Nursery (age 3-5):N/A

Years 1-6 (age 5-11):N/A

Secondary

Years 7-11 (age 11-16): 900

Years 12-13 (age 16-19): 250

Please provide a detailed justification for the size of the proposed Academy:*

The Academy proposal is for a school with an admission number of 180 and a sixth form of 250. This is 31 less than the existing admission number.

Falmer High School currently has an Indicated Admission Number of 211 and an overall school capacity of 1055. Recent trends in admissions to Falmer at Y7 have been stable at around 140 pupils each year. Based on recent trends, a proposal to offer 900 places with an additional sixth form of 250 students at a Falmer Academy would be unsubstantiated. However, it is the Local Authority's firm view that an Academy can sustain itself at this higher capacity and that there will be sufficient demand for places in the future to support this proposal.

The LA has introduced a new admissions system based on local catchment areas for the City to address the increasing pressure of numbers and provide local schools for local children. The creation of the Falmer catchment area has led to an increase in admissions to Falmer this year of 178 students. Projections for the next five years show the catchment area with at least 200 year 7 students and likely large building developments at Preston Park Barracks (Lewes Road) and The Marina (spreadsheets appended). Overall, the Y7 cohort living in this catchment area could rise from the present 200 to 250 from 2011 onwards. The catchment areas are continually under review and it must be noted that the adjacent catchment area for Patcham High School is undersubscribed. However, overall there is an increase in total student numbers in the City for the next five years. Given the pressure on the other catchment areas and the removal of the out of catchment sibling link in 2012 there will be a requirement for at least 900 eleven to sixteen places at Falmer from 2011.

The LA has resisted the opportunity to remove surplus primary places in the area at Moulsecoomb and Fairlight on the basis of this expectation and planning applications.

The South East Plan produced by South Eastern England Regional Assembly (SEERA) sets a housing target of 550 new homes annually for Brighton and Hove until 2026. Over the next 10 years this equates to 5,500 new dwellings across the city as a whole. This level of housing development is likely to generate up to 500 new secondary age pupils over the same period, as identified above this may result in an additional 50 students in the Falmer catchment area.

The Audit Commission has recently published a paper on falling school rolls (Launch Paper for Local Authorities Falling School Rolls and their link to education capital investment) and the effect this will have on secondary schools over the next few years. This paper shows that currently Brighton and Hove has just 5% surplus places across the secondary sector and that this will fall to just 2% by 2013. It is widely accepted that a local authority needs to maintain at least 5% surplus places to allow for parental preference, children who come into the system during the school year etc. This will be addressed by our Education and School Organisation Plan which will ensure that the Falmer cohort is sustained and that there are sufficient places for all children within the City.

In summary, the new catchment area will ensure that the majority of pupils in the north east of the City will access places at their local school, Falmer. The absence of spare capacity within the City, school place planning, the removal of the out of area sibling link and the continuing growth of the City's population will ensure that the Falmer Academy is full.

Plans for the proposed Academy identify a sixth form of 250 students. Currently there are no sixth forms in Brighton where the Academy will be based but there are three schools with sixth forms in Hove. Currently 63% of the Falmer school pupils go on to further education however, in schools with sixth forms this figure is 81%. Given the facilities and curriculum offer of the Academy, it is expected that the majority of pupils who currently leave would remain on roll at the Academy rather than attend other FE institutions. If the figure rose to 81% in line with the other schools, the sixth form in 2010 would be 231, based on the current year 8 and 9 entries which are below the admission number of the proposed academy. If as is predicted the school admits 180 per year from 2008 by 2013 the sixth form would be full purely with pupils from the Academy.

A Concordat covering sixth form provision in this area of the City between Brighton & Hove City Council, City College and the Learning & Skills Council has been agreed and is appended. The Concordat provides a detailed explanation of the complementary post-16 provision which will further attract post-16 pupils to this part of the City. The proposed City College sixth form college is still at the initial planning stage and planning permission for this development has yet to be sought. Similarly the proposed curriculum offer for City College has yet to be determined by the LSC, College and CYPT. As the academy will be in place well before the proposed City College development

at the football stadium the academy sixth form will be a major contributor to plans that will determine the structure and curriculum of this new addition to the City's educational provision.

The CYPT and LSC Sussex are working closely together within an agreed model for joint planning and commissioning. Planning for post-16 education and training falls within this collaborative work, which is also supported by the 14 – 19 Partnership Board for the city. The current city wide strategy – which includes major rebuilding projects for the city's three colleges, the development of skills centres to serve the east and west of the city and the proposed Academy sixth form – responds to growth projections to 2016 which are derived from

- Projections for Brighton and Hove City developments including 10699 new dwellings by 2016
- New curriculum provision better designed to meet the needs of those who are NEET – the NEET figure for Brighton and Hove in 2007 at 10.8% was the highest in the SE region
- Other curriculum initiatives such as the International Baccalaureate which are expected to draw post 16 students from the private sector
- The government's proposals to raise the compulsory participation age

This strategy supports both the sixth form provision at Falmer and the vocational learning facilities proposed nearby by City College. The combination of these facilities on adjoining campuses offers considerable future flexibility and exciting opportunities to the students of the new academy.

3.2 All-age Academies*

If the Academy proposes to cater for primary pupils, please provide a reasoned argument for an all-age Academy: N/A

If the Academy proposes to cater for nursery pupils (age 3-5), please provide details of how this will fit with the Local Authority strategic plan for nursery education: N/A

3.3 Opening Dates*

It is intended that the Academy will open in September 2009 in the existing buildings, although we will look at this very carefully during feasibility to ensure that it is feasible and suitable for the school. The Academy will be procured using the National Framework procurement process. It is anticipated that the construction of new buildings will start in 2009 and be completed by Summer 2011. The site is reasonably large and there are a number of options for the location of the buildings and how their construction will be phased. The Local Authority will work with PfS and the Sponsor during feasibility to develop an Options Appraisal. This will allow a solution to be identified which delivers a good balance of value for money and minimising pupil disruption. The outcomes of the Appraisal will determine the exact opening date.

3.4 Specialism(s) *

The Academy will specialise in: Entrepreneurship and Sport. In addition the academy will develop science as a strength further developing entrepreneurship and engaging both the University of Sussex and the Football Club in developing scientific links with sport and technological links with the University.

3.5 Admissions*

Please confirm that the Academy's admissions policy will comply with admissions law, the School Admissions Code of Practice and the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice as they apply to maintained schools.
Mark if agree

Please confirm that the Academy will have regard to and have an independent appeal panel which acts in accordance with the Secretary of State's guidance on exclusions.
Mark if agree

Please confirm that the admissions policy will ensure that the Academy meets the statutory requirements (i.e. "provides education for pupils of different abilities who are wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the school is situated").
Mark if agree

The Academy will take up its place on the local Admissions Forum.
Mark if agree

If oversubscribed, will the Academy select up to 10% of its pupils by aptitude for the specialism?*

Yes No

If yes, please provide details of how the sponsor will develop a selection mechanism that is not dependent on ability:

Please provide any further details known about the proposed over-subscription criteria and admissions policy. In particular, how the policy will lead to a balanced intake and whether fair banding will be considered*:
The Academy will be a wholly inclusive all ability school. Serving its local community, the intake will be balanced and directed to pupil needs. The prior learning and social deprivation of the area from which the pupils are drawn results in low levels of achievement at entry level. Full consideration will be given at feasibility stage to the detailed organisation of the curriculum particularly in regard to raising entry levels in Literacy and Numeracy and to teaching and learning styles that will stretch achievement and attainment for gifted and talented pupils.

It is expected that the Admissions criteria for over-subscription will be that followed by the Local Authority. The Admissions policy to which the sponsor has agreed to adhere is based on 6 catchment areas across the City. Falmer School is the only secondary school in its catchment area. The catchment area covers almost entirely one ward of the City as detailed above. Criteria

for over-subscription are as follows:

1. Children in the care of the Local Authority (Looked After Children)
2. Compelling medical or other exceptional reasons for attending the school (medical reasons that make it essential for a child to attend a particular school)
3. Sibling link (this will apply where a sibling living in the same household will be attending the school on the date that they are due to start school). The sibling link will only apply within the catchment area after 2012.
4. Catchment Area (in order to qualify under this priority, the address at which the child is normally resident must be within the catchment area)

3.6 Special Educational Needs (SEN)*

Please confirm that the proposed Academy's SEN policy will meet the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. Mark if agree

Please provide details of the proposed Academy's provision for pupils with SEN, including any specific SEN Units:

The Academy is committed to developing the existing provision for SEN.

At present the school has 48% of pupils on the special needs register. Most Teaching Assistants are allocated to departments. Other Teaching Assistants work with specific groups of pupils to meet individual learning needs.

The SEN department provides specific support for pupils at risk of not gaining any qualifications through a Learning Zone. This is a dedicated area where they can receive one-to-one support on coursework and revision. The school also provide a great deal of support for pupils taking GCSEs (examination concessions) and has a transition group in Years 7 & 8 for pupils who find the transfer between primary and secondary particularly difficult. The Transition Centre provides a nurturing environment where specific learning difficulties can be addressed.

The school has an Inclusion Team consisting of an Inclusion Manager and three Inclusion mentors who support students at risk of permanent exclusion. The school also provides an "Exclusion Unit" to provide first day cover for pupils who have received fixed term exclusions from school.

At present the Local Authority has a unit for ASD/Speech & Language support (Swan Centre) located on the school site. This unit largely caters for pupils in the Falmer school catchment area. Currently, these pupils represent 12 of the 16 and this figure is expected to be 14 out of 16 by 2010. The Sponsor has agreed to the transfer of the Swan Centre to the Academy. The Local

Authority has agreed to fully fund the arising Capital (c.£450k) and Revenue cost of establishing the unit within the Falmer Academy.

The Local Authority as part of its SEN provision and Disability Strategy is currently considering the development of Resource Centres linked to secondary schools across the City. As such the Sponsor has agreed that the Swan Centre will still be open to eligible pupils from across the City although never more than 16 in total. Financial support for this small number of pupils will be fully met by the Local Authority through its revenue budget for the Centre.

If proposing to include an SEN Unit, please confirm that it will form part of the Local Authority-wide provision for SEN and that the Local Authority will bear all costs (capital and revenue) of this provision. Mark if agree N/A

3.7 Vision*

Please provide a detailed statement about the vision of the proposed Academy. Particular attention should be given to the ways in which this Academy will counter the effects of deprivation and raise standards of achievement*: **The Sponsor is a local entrepreneur and successful businessman, Rodney Aldridge, Chair of the Aldridge Foundation, who is committed to improving the education opportunities of young people in Brighton & Hove. Rod is already engaged in delivering innovative youth programmes through his Charitable Trust and as a Patron and former Trustee of the Prince's Trust and Chair of the youth charity 'V'. Rod sees the Academies programme as an ideal opportunity to provide first class educational facilities and opportunities, raise aspirations and achievement and make a real difference to the life chances of young people in the Falmer area. Below he gives his compelling reasons why.**

The Sponsor Rodney Aldridge

As the Sponsor for an Academy in my hometown of Brighton & Hove I see it as a way of making a fresh start, learning from the past but making a step change for the future. Since the inception of the Academies Programme I have been interested in sponsoring an Academy in the City. Indeed, I first approached the Council about sponsoring a City Academy at Falmer High School in 2001. Now that the timing for the transformation to an Academy is right, it means a great deal to me to be able to assist the community in which I grew up by being part of the team, which will bring a new educational facility to Falmer. I still own a flat in Hove, have strong family ties there and feel a sense of loyalty and commitment to the area.

The Academy is a unique opportunity to make high quality, relevant, learning available to all pupils. This is a subject close to my heart, as my own path to success was not marked by academic excellence. I was born in Portslade and after failing my 11 plus went to Portslade County School for Boys, which I left at the age of 16. My first job was in local

government as a post boy in the finance department at East Sussex County Council before going onto work for Brighton City Council, where I qualified as an accountant, and subsequently Crawley Borough Council. The significant step change in my career came when I founded the Capita Group, taking the business from its inception in 1984 to being a FTSE 100 company. Today it employs 27,000 people providing services which interact with the lives of 33 million individuals in the UK.

I believe this life changing experience can bring a vital new perspective to the ethos and management of the Academy in Falmer. I also bring the knowledge and experience of delivering an Academy through my Sponsorship of the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy in Darwen near Blackburn, which is due to open in September 2008. That school will have a particular focus on entrepreneurship and equipping young people with the work and social skills they need to succeed in the 21st century. I intend to replicate that focus in Falmer and to inspire students to have the confidence to take advantage of opportunities and to raise aspirations about their own lives and those around them.

My commitment to improving educational opportunity for all is further reflected by my charitable trust, The Rodney Aldridge Charitable Trust, which primarily focuses on the effects of educational underachievement and social exclusion on young people. When I retired from Capita in July 2006, it was to focus on these charitable activities. As a result the Aldridge Foundation was established to support projects, which tackle difficult and contentious social issues, through promoting innovative and practical solutions and working with appropriate delivery partners.

I have always believed that the individual talents of all young people can be harnessed, whether that talent is creative, academic, athletic, and social or business orientated. I am a Patron and former Trustee of the Prince's Trust and Chair of 'V' the youth-led charity launched in May 2006, which aims to inspire and engage over 1 million new young volunteers. In January 2007 I was appointed Chairman of The Lowry, the arts and entertainment venue in Salford. I am on the Court of The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists and was elected fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2006.

I recognise that I was fortunate in being able to realise my potential and hope to encourage others from the community where I developed those skills. Therefore my role as Sponsor is to drive the creativity, vision and energy needed to obtain the support of the key stakeholders involved and to take this project forward to completion.

I see the Falmer Academy having the following features:

- a learning environment in which every member of the school matters, in which everybody can learn and succeed;
- a key commitment to raise the standards of literacy and numeracy for all pupils;

- high standards of behaviour and positive relationships between pupils and staff;
- the development of innovative strategies for motivating pupils and raising aspirations both within the school and the local community;
- specialism in Entrepreneurship and a second specialism in Sport that will provide additional and alternative learning experiences;
- a good academic/vocational balance, with full coverage of the four core National Curriculum subjects;
- an 11-18 age range with innovative partnerships with local schools, colleges, the two universities and Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club;
- the promotion of confident learners through personalised learning;
- use of the core personal development and performance ethos to deliver improvements in teaching and learning and raise standards;
- a modern, efficient approach to its organisation and the management of learning;
- state of the art facilities and equipment.

Ultimately the success of an Academy will be the responsibility of the leadership team and the sponsor is included in the selection and appointment of the Principal. A strong manager with focus, energy and the ability to commit to and drive the specialism is key to improving the lives of the pupils. However, my involvement will go beyond the Academy opening dates and I will continue to take an active and ongoing interest in the future development and running of both schools. Again this shows the added value a sponsor can bring. I can provide a much needed, and often previously lacking, commitment and consistency for both staff and pupils. In our world of constant change and fragmenting social dynamics this is surely a good thing.

Ethos

The Academy will be committed to the highest of standards, levels of achievement and behaviour in all areas of academic and personal development. Pupils will be challenged to achieve through a culture of high expectation and the construction of frameworks that encourage positive attitudes and high aspirations. The Academy will promote quality learning as an entitlement for all pupils. It will realise the potential of all learners through the use of high quality models of teaching and learning designed to meet the needs of the individual.

The Academy will be inclusive and celebrate the richness of today's cultural diversity. It will support any individual in the Academy who experiences obstacles to the realisation of their potential, through strategies appropriate to their needs and through the two specialisms of the school. The Academy will seek to promote a sense of responsibility within each individual. The entrepreneurship specialism, which is unique to this Sponsor in the Academy programme, will provide a range of skills necessary for the workplace and will foster a sense of local

pride and an awareness of the responsibility. At one level this will be responsibility for self, while at another level pupils will be challenged to demonstrate responsibility towards others, in the local community and worldwide. The Academy will promote a positive learning partnership with parents to establish a strong basis for improving the life chances of its pupils.

Through its Ethos the Academy will develop clear practices for encouraging the pupil objectives of:

- High standards of achievement and attainment.**
- High standards of behaviour and personal responsibility.**
- Being able to study and research independently.**
- Becoming a balanced, articulate person with the intellectual freedom to be creative.**
- Developing confidence to initiate.**
- Developing the resilience to cope with adversity.**
- Having compassion for others.**
- Being motivated to have a lifelong desire for learning.**

The Academy will bring a purposefully designed new building, with state-of-the-art facilities that will adapt to current and future technologies. It will introduce a creative and innovative curriculum with the provision of a post-sixteen offer. The Academy will be a community asset and thus the Falmer community will be welcomed into the building, whether this be as mature students, local businesses, community groups or parents.

The ‘user voice’ will be key to developing the Ethos and engagement of all pupils. Teaching and non-teaching staff and community groups will be encouraged in the development and operation of the Academy. In order to foster a sense of responsibility it is paramount to the Sponsor that the pupils are empowered within the Academy. It is difficult to expect pupils to deal with the responsibilities placed upon them by society, if they are not practised in this during their school life. The Sponsor intends to extend the good practice in the school of the student council with members taking a meaningful place on the Governing Body. Ultimately, the School will be managed by a Principal, as Chief Executive, he/she will be accountable for the performance of the Academy to the Governing body who will set the standards, ethos and hold the brand of the school.

The pupil voice will also be heard through behavioural bodies run by pupils and by an active engagement in decisions made such as uniform, developments to the Academy environment and staff appointments. The pupil voice will be synonymous with every aspect of the Academy, giving pupils a sense of pride and a concurrent sense of real responsibility.

The Governors will be responsible for running the Academy in the

interests of not only the pupils, but also the community as a whole. Equally important to the Ethos will be the social and community aspect of entrepreneurship. There will be the opportunity for local community groups to use the Entrepreneurship Centre's facilities and for them to engage with the pupils who will learn about social enterprise and be encouraged to participate in activities that benefit the Falmer community.

It is also envisaged that the Entrepreneurship Centre will be the heart of the Falmer community as well as the Academy. The Entrepreneurship Centre will engage with the community in a number of ways. It will allow applications for use by local small businesses, business start-ups, social enterprises, charities and community groups. It will encourage local businesses to use the Centre to give advice to pupils wishing to start up a business and will encourage local volunteering organisations to promote volunteering opportunities within the community. It will also provide facilities for the Academy to offer a wide range of subjects to all members of the Falmer community looking to learn new skills.

The success of the Entrepreneurship Centre will be measured not only in terms of its benefits to the Academy in traditional enterprise activities, but in its ability to reach out to the local community providing a range of innovative activities and in its ability to create a sense of local pride in the pupils through social entrepreneurship. At the heart of the Academy's Ethos is the belief that the Academy will very much be a partnership between the pupils, parents, the wider community and the Sponsor, and that it will be a focal point for the regeneration of this area of the city for many years to come.

Specialisms and Innovation

The chosen specialism for the Falmer Academy is 'entrepreneurship'. This one specialism will pervade the curriculum at all levels - drawing on local expertise in Brighton & Hove, and preparing pupils for possible employment with established business both large and small or as sole traders or employers themselves. The expertise and experience gained at the Aldridge Darwen Academy is also showing benefits particularly in the more academic areas of Maths, English and Science and this will be brought to the Falmer Academy. Embedding entrepreneurship across all aspects of the curriculum will allow pupils to naturally progress towards shaping their own futures. Pupils will be encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for all aspects of their lives. This will create an understanding of how to challenge and influence society rather than accept what circumstances dictates.

Entrepreneurship will inspire pupils to gain the confidence needed to take advantage of opportunities and to raise aspirations about their own lives. Entrepreneurship describes a state of mind that strives to solve problems rather than accept defeat. An entrepreneur is determined to succeed, is not afraid of failing, remains positive throughout and will

ultimately win through. The Academy will have a dual focus on promoting business enterprise and social enterprise activity. It is intended that all pupils will benefit from the specialisms, which will instil in young people a determination to succeed, to achieve high expectations and to become more responsible for the world within which they are growing up.

To enable this the Academy will:

- Establish a centre of vocational excellence in entrepreneurship, related subjects such as business studies, technology, mathematics and marketing and act as an innovation hub in the expansion of the vocational curriculum at Key Stage 4. Work-based learning will be a key feature, including young apprenticeships, full apprenticeships and progression to foundation and full degree level programmes;

- Develop a wide range of vocational and academic programmes related to the Environment and, in partnership with local colleges, work-based learning providers, higher education institutions and employers.

Develop progression routes, from school to further education to higher education and employment, within the Academy's specialism for pupils of all abilities and interests;

- Engage with major local and regional employers and training providers to provide extensive opportunities for work experience, locally, regionally and internationally, and to work collaboratively to develop young apprenticeship and full apprenticeship programmes and professional development opportunities for staff.

- Place a strong emphasis on the use of technology to support and enhance learning in the curriculum in general, and in the Entrepreneurship specialism in particular;

- Develop innovative modules for integrating and developing core competencies and underpinning knowledge and skills particularly in English and Maths, and in developing high levels of skill in associated curriculum areas.

The Academy will have an Entrepreneurship Centre occupying the physical space in the central atrium of the Academy. The Centre will house a variety of workspaces that could include classroom, lecture and seminar facilities, a conference room, and the necessary technology to support activity backed by technical and administrative support staff. Above all the Entrepreneurship Centre will be a flexible space, equipped with the technology to facilitate entrepreneurship. This will lend itself to Academy lessons, breakout learning sessions, enterprise day/week activities, assemblies, conferences, trade fairs, exhibitions and pupil pods.

It is intended that the Entrepreneurship Centre will be used not only by Academy pupils, but pupils from other primary and secondary schools and colleges, adult and community learners and the local business community. The Entrepreneurship Centre is intended to be a bold statement of the Academy's specialism and to provide a facility for community and business involvement with the Academy.

The specialism also includes social entrepreneurship through which an individual will examine what it means to be a part of a community and to work with partners to develop that community. Pupils will also be encouraged through social responsibility classes to participate in community-based activities with the aim of helping them to be proud of their town, environment and community. They will volunteer in community-based projects in order to gain a greater understanding of and provide a valuable service for the local area and the people it serves. Staff will also be encouraged to be entrepreneurial in their outlook and this will include volunteering for projects in the local community. The social and community aspects of the specialism differentiate entrepreneurship from other "enterprise" based curriculums.

The second of the Academy's specialisms is sport. The development of new sports facilities at the Academy will be designed to complement the existing amenities in both the two Universities, the adjacent extensive Racquet and Health Centre and the planned 20,000 seat community football stadium exploiting their proximity and engagement potential to widening the participation of all students in sporting activity and encouraging them to naturally adopt a more energetic lifestyle. Competitive sports will help foster soft skills such as teamwork, communication and a healthy desire to succeed. The Academy will promote less traditional sports such as boarding, beach and nautical sports in order to develop a wide range of routes for pupils to participate in and excel. There will also be an emphasis on the expressive and performing arts, particularly music and dance to encourage all round development, social skills and artistic interests. The Academy will seek to capture the vibrant social and cultural mix of Brighton and bring this to the curriculum through engagement in a variety of experiences and events. The Academy will explore operating a 'house' structure so that those who do not represent the school in sport, music and drama will be able to participate in a wide range of in-school competitive events.

In order to encourage pupils to develop varied and healthy eating habits, the Academy will encourage pupils to eat a balanced diet and the catering offer together with vocational studies will reflect this. Importantly, pupils will be consulted in order to make the provision healthy but realistic and to ensure pupil buy-in. There will also be facilities for pupils to be involved with the provision of food in the Academy along with exploring catering careers and business opportunities.

As a result of the dual specialisms, the Academy will aim to produce young adults with a state of mind which strives to solve problems rather than accept defeat. The Academy will equip pupils with the necessary skills for owning their own business, engaging in modern workplace and will give a sense of social responsibility and enjoyment in a healthy life.

Curriculum Direction and Delivery

The Sponsor believes that the prime focus for the Academy should be achievement in literacy and numeracy, often through entrepreneurial experiences, as this will be the starting point for pupils to access the rest of the curriculum. The Sponsor intends to develop links with the voluntary sector, particularly to strengthen the emotional development of pupils as they progress through the Academy. The Sponsor will also explore the development of a vibrant link with both the adjacent Universities to enable a broader curriculum which will bring Academy pupils into regular contact with university tutors and under/graduate students. The Sponsor expects that the Academy will build partnerships with at least one international network of schools which will involve teacher and pupil exchanges and the sharing of excellent practice. The Academy will benefit from a highly effective back office support to allow teachers to concentrate on teaching and learning.

The Academy will create a centre of excellence offering education and lifelong learning opportunities, not just for pupils but also for parents, staff and the wider Falmer community. The overarching aim is to unlock the potential in every pupil through the chosen specialism of entrepreneurship.

The Academy will:

- **Raise standards and aspirations even higher to prepare young people for a rapidly changing world;**
- **Ensure, through effective and well supported teaching and curriculum development, excellent value added and the opportunity to enjoy and achieve success across a broad spectrum of experience while enabling all young people to specialise and build upon strengths and expertise;**
- **Be well led and managed, at ease with accountability and confident with its wider community;**
- **Develop the Academy's involvement in collaborative activities to maximise the educational offer to all young people in the area;**
- **Play its full part in the CYPT's inclusion policy and ensure the best possible local educational provision for all children particularly those with special needs**
- **Seek to develop the very best teaching and learning strategies in order to accelerate students' progress and ensure that they make the greatest possible learning gains and achieve their full potential. Every pupil will have an individual learning plan, a differentiated and flexible**

timetable, and will be supported through mentoring, coaching and through regular progress tracking;

- Place strong emphasis on the use of technology to support and enhance learning. ICT will be embedded into every curriculum and management area and will be the key to the development of personalised learning. Independent and supervised study will be an important aspect of the Academy and ICT will be developed in such a way as to lead to growth of the pupils as independent learners;
- Become a centre of vocational excellence generally, as well as in its specialisms, with a curriculum that places significant emphasis on courses such as applied GCSE, BTEC and on extended work experience, young apprenticeships and work-based and work related learning;
- Explore creative and innovative approaches to meeting individual needs, for example enhancing core learning and basic skills (including intensive English, maths and ICT), an integrated Key Stage 3 curriculum, stage not age progression, and mixed age group organisation when appropriate. Pupils will also be encouraged to take part in a wide range of voluntary and social enrichment and community development programmes during an extended learning day.

Teach ICT as a specific subject in itself, given its increased importance in the modern workplace and prominence across the curriculum.

- Regular Academy days when timetable activities for particular year groups will be suspended to enable extended activities to take place making use of the specialist facilities.
- Having an Entrepreneurial Centre of excellence will provide the focus for the Academy's specialism and promote business and vocational education.

The Academy is sincere in its desire to use different teaching and learning methods to develop a creative, energetic and inspiring atmosphere. The curriculum will accommodate the differing learning needs of all students. The Academy will be an inclusive school and will operate an admissions policy in line with the local authority. The new curriculum model to be adopted in Year 7 from September this year will go a long way to embedding these changes.

It is planned to explore the concept of Studio Schools, which offer a link between education and the world of work. This combines education and paid work in an environment closer to the working environment than that offered at school.

Delivery of the curriculum will be characterised by:

- A culture of high expectation leading to high standards of achievement.

- Engaging and rigorous teaching and learning activities.
- Active enquiry, with modern pedagogical practices that recognise the existence of multiple intelligences and the preferred learning styles associated with these.
- The use of real-life contexts.
- The extensive use of digital technology including interactive whiteboards in all learning areas.

The formal curriculum will be complemented by extended-day programmes that will offer a broad range of arts, technology, sports and recreational activities as well as study support and a variety of additional classes and learning opportunities. Both the formal curriculum and the extended-day activities will contain strong elements that are designed to encourage the skills and competencies which lead to positive personal development and enhanced employability.

It is the Sponsor's belief that a vibrant Sixth Form is essential in the Academy to raise aspirations of others to progress in this way. Having young adults in the Sixth Form present in the Academy will provide role models for those lower down the school. The aim will be to encourage pupils to stay on at the Academy to develop their learning and look towards a university place thus increasing the options they have in the development of their career options. It is recognised that it will take some time to develop a Sixth Form but the Sponsor wishes this to be a route that many choose rather than leaving the education system at Year 11. It is also essential that as much attention is given to the gifted and talented pupils as is placed on those who need greater support and attention to develop.

The aim is that it will be a natural progression for most pupils to continue to the Sixth Form, whether this is to undertake academic or vocational training or a combination of the two. In order to facilitate this it is envisaged that every pupil will have a personal educational plan helping them to decide the next phase of their development whether that be progression to a Sixth Form or to some form of vocational learning. It is the Sponsor's feeling that this advice should be provided by a specialist with recruitment skills rather than by a member of the teaching staff. This advice should begin at an earlier stage in school life to make the selection of GCSE's more effective. Parents will also be encouraged to be active in this process. As a result of the sixth form provision and the focus on a new model of innovative career advice, pupils leaving Falmer Academy will be better equipped to make and execute decisions about their future.

The Academy's atmosphere will be highly aspirational. Progress and success in academic, vocational, sporting, musical and creative areas will be strongly celebrated. Every pupil will be encouraged and expected to strive for the highest level of individual success and everyone involved in the school will share this vision.

Working With Partners and Stakeholders

The Sponsor believes that there is a substantial educational and community need for an Academy in Falmer to break the cycle of underachievement in areas of social and economic deprivation. Motivation and self-belief will increase as will self-confidence and consequently the desire to learn and achieve. In recognition of the desire to work in partnership with other key stakeholders in the regeneration of the area, the Sponsor will work with the existing Falmer High School, Brighton and Sussex Universities, City College, Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club and the Local Authority in ensuring that the plans for the area are delivered and the benefits maximised.

To encourage partnership working, the Sponsor will chair a quarterly meeting of the Partnership Board that will include the Chief Executive Officer, DCS, the Vice Chancellors of the Universities, the LSC, Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club, Project Director and representatives from the DCSF. The Sponsor will also chair the monthly Academy Steering Group meetings and will be involved in appointing the Principal Designate, developing the curriculum specialisms and at the appropriate time will have responsibility for the process selecting the Governors of the Falmer Academy. The Sponsor will remain committed to the growth and success of Falmer Academy well beyond the date of opening.

The Sponsor will work in partnership throughout the implementation and management of this Academy with the expectation that the Academy will play a full role in the City's education policies and will build on the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan for Brighton & Hove and collaborate with other partners to maximise the life chances of young people in the wider community. The Academy will also be available for use by local businesses for hot-desking, taking advantage of the ICT facilities, to host meetings and make presentations, both to external groups and the pupils of the Academy.

Specifically the Academy will support other schools in:

- **Implementing differentiated and tailored learning environments including innovative use of ICT.**
 - **Developing approaches to engaging young people to make commitments to lifelong learning,**
 - **Delivering a range of agreed Key Stage 4 courses to support the local learning system, and in particular in developing and implementing vocational courses**
- Working closely and interactively with its feeder primary schools to support a nurturing and supportive transition from Year 6 to Year 7**
- **Establishing links with other local schools and colleges, which provide complementary courses.**
 - **Hosting the City's Swan Centre, which provides support for 16 pupils with Speech and Language difficulties.**
 - **Providing specialist facilities to support an innovative curriculum**

that is open to community use.

The Sponsor is committed to and believes strongly in the benefit of partnership work in the community. As such the Academy's facilities will enable pupils and local schools and colleges to participate in traditional entrepreneurial activity, starting up and running businesses, art exhibitions, fashion shows and other events. The Academy will encourage all pupils to see their learning as part of a wider development of the whole person.

Section 4: The Academy Site and Building

4.1 Site Basics

The Academy will be located at the following address: Falmer High School, Lewes Road, Brighton, BN1 9PW

The approximate size of the site to be transferred to the Academy Trust is:
7.5Ha

Will the proposed Academy have access to playing fields of a sufficient size to deliver its proposed vision and curriculum? Yes No

Please provide details: The site area to be transferred to the Academy Trust is 7.5Ha which includes a large flat area of team games playing space. BB98 gives formula for calculating site and building sizes for secondary schools. Using the formula in Appendix 3 the range of overall site size for a school of 900 11 - 16 year olds and 250 16 - 18 year olds is 7.0Ha to 7.9Ha. This gives a clear indication that the playing fields will be of a sufficient size to deliver the curriculum.

A copy of the Ordnance Survey map is attached, with the boundaries of the Academy site clearly marked. Yes No

4.2 Site Ownership

The site of the proposed Academy is owned by the*: **Local Authority** (if other, please provide details):

If it is not currently a school site, please provide details of the ownership and current usage of the entire site and details of who will bear the costs of acquiring the site: N/A

If the site is currently a school site, it will be transferred at nil cost (or leased at nominal rent) to the Academy Trust prior to the Academy opening, with terms agreed prior to Funding Agreement. Mark if agree N/A

If the site is owned by the Local Authority, does it intend to seek permission to dispose of any part of it? Yes No N/A

If yes, please provide details:

The current school site is larger than required by BB98 and so the LA intends to dispose of part of it. The LA understands PfS's rules on how any capital gains from site disposal should contribute to the Academy and, should there be a capital gain, would follow these rules.

The remainder of the site (approximately 7.5 Ha) will be transferred to the Academy Trust prior to opening. The LA's preference for this transfer would be on a 125 year lease with the freehold being retained by the Council.

The Local Authority has engaged with the School Assets team at the DCSF in Darlington and received notification in January 2007 that the Department was satisfied that Brighton and Hove City Council had General Consents under Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Schedule to the School Playing Fields General Disposal and Change of Use Consent (No3) 2004 (Section 77 Agreement). These consents apply to land occupied by the South Building and an area of land earmarked for a combined footway and cycleway at Falmer High School. As a result of these approvals the prior consent of the Secretary of State is not required.

4.3 Site Issues

Please confirm that the site is clear and unencumbered.* Mark if agree

Or, if this is not the case, a detailed strategy has been agreed with DCSF for the clearance of the site and the bearing of associated costs including the details for dealing with any current tenants on the site:

There are five covenants on the Falmer site covering the usual range of utilities, each of which has the appropriate easements. It is envisaged that these will transfer to the Academy's Trust in the normal way and that no risks or responsibilities in relation to the covenants are out of the ordinary.

The current school site includes an area along its south east / south west edge known as the Westlain plantation (approximate area 1.85Ha). The Westlain plantation is an area of Ancient and Protected Woodland. It is not intended to transfer this area to the Academy Trust.

The current school site includes an emergency access route from the University of Brighton site which is immediately adjacent on the north eastern side of the school. This access route is not the primary emergency access route but will need to be maintained across the Academy site. There is scope, during the OBC stage, for amending the line of the emergency access route so that it follows the emergency access route that will be required for the new Academy.

The existing school buildings do contain asbestos although none of this is categorised as Priority 1. However, as part of the demolition of the North building which occupies the proposed site for the Academy, the cost of dealing with the removal of asbestos will be an "abnormal" factor. Positive discussions with PFS are ongoing and agreement on Abnormals will be fully explored during the OBC stage.

A full ground investigation of the site has been commissioned and a draft report has been received. This suggests that there is no land contamination on the existing school site that would preclude building. The draft report indicates that there is an area immediately adjacent to the railway line that

contains ash (as would be expected) but this is unlikely to cause any construction issues, The remainder of the site is chalk.

The current school has two access points. The first is via Lucraft Road (an adopted highway), and provides both vehicular and pedestrian access to the current school at all times. The second access is directly from the A270 Lewes Road. This access provides vehicular and pedestrian access via an unadopted road under the Brighton to Lewes railway line. This is closed off to vehicular traffic during the school day.

The planning consent for the proposed nearby community stadium requires 1,000 over flow car parking spaces to be provided in the vicinity of the stadium for a maximum of 35 days per year. One possible location for these parking spaces is the area of the existing school site that the Council is to retain, ie the area currently occupied by the current South Building of the school. The Council is looking at options for the development of this land and how the car parking could be provided in conjunction with other enabling development. This work will be done separately from the Academy development to minimise delays.

If the Academy proposes to open in existing buildings (Section 3.3), please provide a brief description of the age, size and condition of these buildings:

The Academy will be procured using the National Framework procurement process. It is anticipated that the construction of new buildings will start in 2009 and be completed by Summer 2011. The site is reasonably large and there are a number of options for the location of the buildings and how their construction will be phased. The Local Authority will work with PfS and the sponsor during feasibility to develop an Options Appraisal. This will allow a solution to be identified which delivers a good balance of value for money and minimising pupil disruption.

The existing North building, of 4554 gross internal sqm, was built in the 1960s is in poor condition having received no major investment for 15 years . There is a small, free-standing, block of 792 sqm containing a dining area and the school caretaker's one bedroom accommodation.

The existing South building was built in the 1950's as Stanmer County Secondary School. It has a gross internal area of 7,454 square metres. The condition and layout of the building is much as one would expect from a building of that period. The building is a steel frame structure encased in concrete with cavity brick/blockwork walls. Many of the existing steel single glazed windows still exist. Some units have been replaced with uPVC double glazing. Roofs are reinforced concrete covered with bituminous roofing felt. The building structure is in a sound condition, however, it is outmoded and inflexible.

It is intended to use the South Building for some decant purposes, however, its layout is not ideal given today's teaching and learning methods as there is no flexibility in the layout. Prolonged use would be, it is felt, detrimental to teaching and learning and improving standards of achievement. The accommodation comprises general teaching, specialist teaching classrooms,

two halls, a gym and office space. The majority of the classrooms are below the sizes suggested in BB98. The layout of the building makes circulation and behaviour management an issue. Given these factors, it is intended to minimise the length of time this building will need to be used during the decant period.

Please provide details of discussions with Local Authority planners or legal advisors on any likely planning or legal restrictions that could preclude Academy building development, lead to abnormal costs, or impact on the proposed programme:

At the current time the Council is in the process of securing outline planning consent for an Academy of 10,338 sqm on the site of the existing North Building of Falmer High School, it is anticipated that this application will have been determined by mid June 2008.

The existing school site is in part flat and in part quite steeply sloping. The flat area is immediately adjacent to the Brighton to Lewes railway line and comprises the school playing fields. The existing North building occupies the sloping part of the site. The proposal for the new Academy re-sites the school on this area as the South Building stands on land which has Section 77 approval to be released. A full Options Appraisal for the siting of the Academy will be undertaken at OBC stage but it is expected that the cost of building on the flat area and then re-grading the sloping area to create playing pitches would be prohibitive due to the requirement for retaining walls and other considerations. In addition the mitigation measures needed to insulate the Academy from the noise created by the railway line if located on the playing field would add considerably to the cost of the building and would need to include non carbon efficient mechanical ventilation.

The initial massing design prepared for Outline Planning Consent for the Academy takes full advantage of the sloping site and does not require the ground to be levelled. However, this may involve some additional costs and these costs will be quantified with PfS during the OBC stage.

A proper and rigorous options appraisal is being carried out and will be included as part of the OBC.

Please provide brief details of a satisfactory plan for dealing with any co-locating primary school, Pupil Referral Unit, youth or community groups sharing the site, including who will bear associated capital and revenue costs:

Currently the school has a number of surplus places and in an attempt to make good use of its assets the school hosts a number of other facilities within its buildings. These include two nurseries, a community adult learning facility (The Bridge) and the Speech and Language/ASD Centre (The Swan). None of these additional facilities are housed in the North Building. The South Building is the part of the site that the Council intends to retain and will not therefore form part of the Academy site. However, the Council has committed to re-provide these facilities in the following ways:

The Swan Centre - Local Authority to fully fund Capital and Revenue cost of transfer to the Academy. Work has been undertaken on the cost of providing a unit similar in size to the existing Swan Centre within the proposed academy. The costs of doing this are likely to be in the order of £450,000 (£Q2009) based on the costs within the DCSF FAM.

The Bridge Centre - The Local Authority has never provided Capital or Revenue funding for this centre which is run by a charity and is funded and staffed through grant applications. The majority of the grant funding for the Centre came from NDC funds which ceased on 31 March 2008. Therefore, the future of the Bridge Centre is uncertain in both the short and long term. However, the Local Authority, on its behalf, has negotiated with Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club that full re-provision, which would extend the Club's current "Heading for Success" work, will be made within the proposed new community stadium. Brighton & Hove Albion has confirmed that it will meet the Capital costs of this re-provision. Should there be a time difference between the need for the Bridge Centre to vacate the South Building and the establishment of the new facilities, the Local Authority confirms that it would cover the cost of temporary accommodation for this period.

The School Caretaker's Flat - The Local Authority will fully fund the Capital cost of re-providing this one bedroom accommodation.

The Huggles and Daisy Chain Nurseries - Both nurseries have leases with the Local Authority which terminate in December 2008. If possible, their leases may be further extended but this will be dependent upon the works programme. Discussions will take place with the Early Years team about possible relocation and the adequacy of local early years provision.

Other authority staff presently based in the school buildings, such as the traveller service, will be relocated elsewhere within the City.

Section 106 - The Local Authority confirms that it will meet the full cost of any Section 106 arrangement and that there is no requirement to fund this from the Academy's Funding Agreement.

Where required in response to site constraints or as a result of remodelling, please provide details of a decanting plan for existing occupants during construction and details of who will pay the associated costs:

As mentioned above the school currently has a high level of surplus places and therefore some spare space. A full options appraisal will take place during feasibility to determine the best way to phase the building work and decant the pupils. Among other options this will include looking at: a complete demolition of the North Building with all pupils moving to the South Building; and at a phased build which enables some use of the North building while the new buildings are under construction.

Please confirm that the Local Authority will meet the cost of any off-site works that may be associated with the development of the Academy.

Mark if agree

4.4 Building and Project Management*

The Department intends to deliver all procurement through Partnerships for Schools (PfS) and Local Authorities. This Academy will be procured through:
PfS National Framework

If other, please provide details of an alternative procurement strategy agreed with DCSF:

Section 5: Agreements

5.1 Sponsor Agreement

Rod Aldridge will provide funding towards this Academy project. A Deed of Gift will be required alongside the Funding Agreement to confirm the sponsorship*.

Please confirm that at least £500,000 of this sponsorship donation will be paid at the time of Funding Agreement and that the remainder will be paid within 5 years from that date.

Mark if agree

Please provide details: The sponsor's endowment will be targetted on four main themes:

- stretching the gifted and talented
- reducing regression at entry
- ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils
- promoting sporting and artistic prowess

Each of these themes will bring additionality to the main curriculum. They are designed to provide enrichment and extension, both widening the breadth of pupils' experiences and building soft skills such as talents, teamwork and competition. Below are examples of the sorts of activities envisaged to support these four themes:

- it is intended that a wide variety of trips and experiences will be provided ranging from international and adventure holidays, architectural, historical and archeological sites, museums, galleries, theatres and theatre workshops. A social entrepreneurial fund will be created to enable those pupils from the families most financially challenged to fully engage in these activities. The social entrepreneurial fund will also be available for pupils to bid into for activities and events which they desire to participate in and for which they will be expected to raise match funding.
- developing excellence in sports by using professional coaches to help team building and an understanding of group dynamics, leadership, team roles, delegation and responsibility.
- twinning activities with similar institutions in the north of the UK and in the USA to develop exchange programmes enabling gifted and talented pupils to stretch their abilities in other environments and learn from others with like interests.
- exploiting the array of theatrical and performing artists from within Brighton & Hove City's environments thus bringing this particularly vibrant cultural mix into the school and enabling pupils to engage in performances outside the school environment.
- the development of an Academy orchestra operated on a business model with all the logistical, technical, media and communications support being

provided by pupils.

- providing funding for the main feeder primary schools to enable teaching and non-teaching staff to work within the Academy with its Year 7 group and conversely for Academy staff to work in feeder primary schools. This will provide continuity and consistency of staff across the transition period. These shared teaching arrangements will be supported by interactive curriculum/project work.

Please confirm that you understand and are content with the roles and responsibilities of the Sponsor, as set out in *Sponsor Guidelines*.

Mark if agree

5.2 Local Authority Agreement*

Does the Local Authority agree to all aspects of this proposal, including the admissions criteria proposed in Section 3? Yes No

Does the Local Authority confirm that it will bring forward proposals for the closure of any predecessor schools? Yes No

Is this proposal included (or will be included) within the Local Authority's BSF Strategy for Change? Yes No

If you have answered no to either of these questions, please provide full details:

The DCSF anticipate that Brighton and Hove will not fully enter Building Schools for the Future until 2016. Consequently our strategy for change has not yet been fully developed. The Local Authority confirms that Falmer Academy will be procured using the National Framework for Procurement.

If this project involves a predecessor school, please provide details of the proposed consultation that the Local Authority will undertake on its closure:

In mid April 2008 the Local Authority will start a positive media/press campaign in the Falmer area and across the City.

On 1 May 2008, the Local Authority will start the pre Statutory Notice period of consultation on the closure of Falmer High School with the local community, parents and staff, surrounding local authorities and interested parties. This will include public meetings, union and staff meetings. All aspects of the DCSF's guidelines will be followed. It is hoped that the External Consultants engaged by the DCSF and the Sponsor will be commissioned by 1 May 2008 and the Local Authority, with them, will be able to run a joint closure/Academy opening consultation/information campaign.

The results of this consultation together with the request to issue Statutory Notices for the closure of Falmer School will be submitted to Cabinet in mid July 2008. This allows two weeks for representations in July and a further four weeks in September giving the required six week period with the resulting outcomes being considered for determination by Cabinet in mid October 2008.

5.3 Neighbouring Local Authority Agreement*

If the proposed Academy is likely to impact upon neighbouring Local Authorities, have these Authorities been consulted and approved this Academy project. Yes No N/A

5.4 Governing Body Agreement*

If this Academy project involves a predecessor school, the Governing Body of that school has agreed to this proposal? Yes No

Please provide details: An Extraordinary meeting of the Governing Body was held on 19 March 2008 and was attended by the sponsor and the Project Director. Governors present and entitled to vote were 11 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

5.5 Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Agreement*

Has the Local LSC been consulted on and agreed to any proposed post-16 provision? Yes No

A letter confirming support is attached? Yes No

If No - Please provide copies of any correspondence and give details of LSC objections:

5.6 Diocese Agreement

If applicable, please confirm that the Diocese/Archdiocese has agreed to this proposal and has formal Board of Education/ Diocesan Schools Commission agreement. Yes No N/A

Please provide details: Informal consultation has been held. As this is neither a denominational school or proposed Academy, no objections are envisaged.

5.7 Site and Building

All parties are content with the selection of this site and no others are under consideration for this project. Mark if agree

The Department has put out a tender on the open market for the Project

Management of Academy projects. Please confirm that all parties are content to select a Project Management company from the DCSF framework.*

Mark if agree

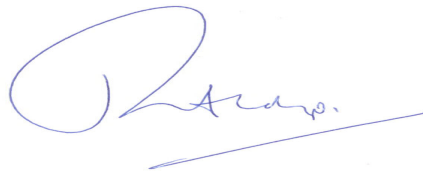
Please confirm that all parties understand and are content with the roles and responsibilities of the Sponsor, Steering Group, Academy Trust, Local Authority and PfS in relation to the Academy buildings, as set out in *Delivering Academy Buildings through PfS*:

Mark if agree

5.8 Please provide details of any known impediments, risks, conditions or hazards not mentioned elsewhere in this document: No risks are foreseen at this time, however, a full risk assessment on all aspects of the development will be completed as part of the OBC.

5.9 We fully support all aspects of this Expression of Interest and agree to use it as a basis for the future development of an Academy project.

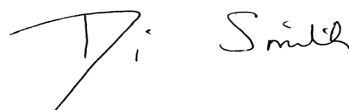
Signature:



(For and on behalf of the Sponsor)

Name in full: Rodney Aldridge
Position: Sponsor
Date: 28/08/08

Signature:



(For and on behalf of the Local Authority)

Name in full: Ms Di Smith
Position: Director of Children's Services
Date: 28/08/08



Ms Vanessa Brown
Lead Member for Children's Services

Section 6: Contact Details

Name of Sponsor representative:

Address: Sally Ritchie (TBC), Aldridge Foundation, 19 Buckingham St,
London, WC2N 6EF

Email: sally.ritchie@aldridgefoundation.com

Tel: 020 7925 7901

Mobile: 07986 341819

Fax:

Name of Local Authority representative:

Address: Ms Lorraine O'Reilly, Brighton & Hove City Council, King's House,
Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2SU

Email: lorraine.o'reilly@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Tel: 01273 294226

Mobile: 07970 884590

Fax: 01273 293695

Name of predecessor school representative:

Address: Mr Stuart McLaughlin, Headteacher, Falmer High School, Lewes
Road, Brighton, BN1 9PW

Email: stuartmcl@falmer.brighton-hove.sch.uk

Tel: 01273 691191

Mobile:

Fax: 01273 620478

Closure of Falmer High School

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Director of Children's Services, Brighton & Hove City Council, King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2SU intends to discontinue Falmer High School Lewes Road Falmer Brighton BN1 9PW on 31 August 2010.

It is proposed to close Falmer High School to enable the establishment of an Academy. The closure of Falmer High School is dependent on the opening of an Academy on the same site the following day.

It is not anticipated that any pupils who currently attend Falmer High School will be displaced as a result of the proposed school closure. All pupils at the school who wish to continue their education in that location will be offered a place at the newly created Academy. The proposed Academy will provide 900 places for children ages 11 – 16 and 250 sixth form places.

The existing school has an ASD unit, This will be re-provided within the Academy and all pupils within the unit will be able to transfer to the newly formed Academy if they so wish.

There will be no displaced pupils as a result of this proposal, the current Local Authority transport policy will apply. The current secondary admission arrangements are based on catchment areas. This will equally apply to the proposed Academy. Catchment areas support local school attendance and pupils are able to walk to school or use local public transport infrastructure.

All the necessary statutory consultation requirements relating to the proposal have been complied with.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Gil Sweetenham Assistant Director, Brighton & Hove City Council, Room 317 King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2LS, by telephoning 01273 293433 or emailing gil.sweetenham@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Di Smith Director of Children's Services, Brighton & Hove City Council, King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2SU.

Signed:

Publication Date:

LOCATIONS OF STATUTORY NOTICES

1. Published in Argus newspaper on 1st September 2008
2. At school entrance points – 4 No (Lucraft Road Entrance, Railway Tunnel Entrance, South Building entrance and North building entrance)
3. The Bridge Adult and Community Learning Centre
4. Local Post Offices (University of Sussex Post Office and Coldean Post Office)
5. Primary Schools within the catchment Area for Falmer High School (Moulsecoomb Primary, Bevendean Primary, Coldean Primary, Fairlight Primary and Coombe Road Primary)
6. All Brighton and Hove Libraries (including Moulsecoomb & Coldean)
7. Learning and Development Centre
8. Moulsecoomb Children's Centre
9. Bevendean Children's Centre
10. Moulsecoomb Family Centre (Hillview)
11. Moulsecoomb Hall Community Centre
12. 67 centre
13. Moulsecoomb Medical Centre
14. Moulsecoomb Social Services Office

Summary Statements of Support for the Academy

“We welcome the way in which the post-16 element is being developed in close consultation with other providers, in particular City College, reflected in the Sponsor’s invitation for City College and LSC Sussex to be represented on the Falmer Academy Partnership Board. It will be important to continue to plan realistically for sixth form numbers at the Academy, taking into account the needs of learners and the other imaginative developments in post-16 provision being developed across the City.

The mix of existing and planned provision on the ‘Falmer campus’, which includes the Academy, City College, the universities and the Community Stadium, provides an exciting opportunity for leading edge developments in partnership and progression.

LSC Sussex believes that the approach that the Sponsor and the City Council have adopted towards the development of an Academy at Falmer will result in new opportunities for learners in the immediate area and beyond. We therefore support the Council’s intention formally to close Falmer High School, to enable the establishment of an Academy.”

David Smith
Area Director, Kent, Surrey & Sussex
Learning & Skills Council

“The University of Brighton gives its strong support for the development of an Academy at the Falmer School site. The vision for the Academy – with its dual emphasis on Entrepreneurship and Sport – fits well with a number of the University of Brighton’s strengths. We see many possibilities for collaborative working which will greatly benefit students.”

David House
Deputy Vice-Chancellor

“The University of Sussex is pleased to support the development of the Falmer Academy.

We will be able to offer expertise and advice in areas such as the development of the science curriculum and the area of entrepreneurship. The proposals for a sixth form at the Academy will strengthen our links around access to higher education for students.”

**Professor Paul Layzell
Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

“As Director of Children’s Services, I wholeheartedly support the development of an Academy on the present Falmer High School site. An Academy would add significantly to the diversity of choice offer for parents in the city. It will bring to the family of secondary schools within the city a new and interesting perspective. The creativity, energy, resources and facilities that the Academy will bring to this area of the city will be invaluable. The Academy and indeed the current Falmer High School, serve one of the most deprived areas of the city where 37.61% of the adult population have no formal qualifications and NEET figures are almost double the city average at 11.6%. The current school has improved considerably in the last few years and has good ‘Added Value’ results, however, GCSE results mean that it is part of the National Challenge Programme and, as such, the Academy offers an excellent route for significant school improvement.”

Di Smith
Director of Children’s Services

“I am pleased to offer our support and commitment to the plans for the proposed Falmer Academy. City College, Brighton is keen to work with you and to collaborate through our concordat so that we can inspire learners in this part of the City to achieve and significantly improve success rates.”

Phil Fryer
Principal and Chief Executive

“The vast majority of the 14-19 Partnership Board welcomes the proposed Academy to the learning community of the City. The adoption of the Council’s Admissions and SEN policies and arrangements and its rejection of aptitude testing for pupils demonstrates the Academy’s commitment to work with rather than outside the community of schools. The resources that the Academy will bring to staff and pupils in the Falmer area of the City will have a significant beneficial impact for the community and for the pupils’ prospects.”

Janet Felkin
Chair, 14-19 Partnership Board

“The Club fully supports the Falmer Academy Post-16 Curriculum Concordat and its vision to provide appropriate and attractive progression routes for Academy students aged 16 plus which will ensure

their continuing engagement. We are confident that our programmes will help to create many exciting new learning opportunities for young people”

Martin Perry
Chief Executive
Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club

“Sussex Cricket Club is committed to working with the proposed Falmer Academy. It is a great opportunity for young people who live in the area. We believe that our partnership will enhance the sporting experience of students and that it will complement the Sports specialism.”

Tim Marks
Community Liaison Officer
Sussex County Cricket Club

“Action for Bevendean Community is a community forum whose constituted objectives include being a representative forum for the Bevendean Area. To this end, at our recent open community meeting the residents of Bevendean were presented to by Lorraine O’Reilly on the forthcoming plans for the proposed Falmer Academy. As a group the proposal was very well received and a formal vote was held with 15 people being in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention.

On the whole, the Falmer Academy project is seen as a positive and exciting advancement for the young people of Bevendean.”

Robert Brown
Chair of Action for Bevendean Community

**DCSF Response to the e-petition to Number10.gov.uk
The Official site of the Prime Minister's Office**

Wednesday 8 October 2008

Falmer Academy – epetition response

We received a petition asking:

“We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to stop the closure of Falmer High School in Brighton & Hove and hold a ballot to decide if an Academy is what the community wants.”

Details of Petition:

“Please stop the closure of the already improving Falmer High school in Brighton & Hove only to replace it with an Academy that will specialise in entrepreneurship and sport. Keep Falmer High School as a state comprehensive run by education professionals and not a wealthy businessman with no educational background. Allow the school to continue to improve and enable the staff to continue to do their jobs to a high standard under the leadership of the Head. A ballot across the Brighton and Hove community would provide evidence that an academy is NOT actually wanted.”

Read the Government's Response

“Academies are all-ability State schools with a mission to transform education. They are established and managed by sponsors with funding from the government. They are not maintained by the local authority, but are set up with its consent and collaborate closely with it and other schools in the area.

Sponsors are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school, leading the governing body, setting goals and standards, determining curriculum, admissions and hiring top staff. The day to day running of the school is left to the headteacher and teaching staff. Evidence from National Audit Office, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), and, most importantly, Academy headteachers show that they find the drive, skills, and support from their sponsors to be invaluable and a key part of the success of their schools.

It is proposed that Falmer School will be replaced by an Academy in September 2010. The Academy will be sponsored by Rod Aldridge, the founder of the Capita Group, who grew up in Hove. The Universities of Brighton and West Sussex will be education partners of the Academy.

The Academy proposal is currently in its feasibility stage. This means that consultation is underway by the local authority and the Academy sponsor on the closure of Falmer School and its replacement by an Academy. The closure consultation began on 1 September and lasts for six weeks. It follows earlier consultation by the council, before the summer break, on the Academy proposal. Once closure consultation has been completed and responses considered, the council will then make a final decision in October as to whether to approve the closure proposal. As happens with most Academy proposals any closure decision will be subject to the Academy then being given approval to go ahead by DCSF Ministers. We current expect Ministers to be able to decide the Falmer Academy Funding Agreement proposal in late October or shortly afterwards, but subject to the feasibility stage having been successfully completed, and the necessary legal, educational and other steps having been taken. The following link is to the local authority website on the proposal: www.proposedfalmeracademy.org.

Independent assessment of the Academies Programme show that they are working:

The National Audit Office report found that GCSE performance is improving faster in Academies than in other types of school. Taking account of both pupils' personal circumstances and their prior attainment, Academies' GCSE performance is substantially better, on average, than other schools.

The 2007 PWC report said that Academies' progress in terms of pupil achievement has generally exceeded corresponding movements at a national level and amongst similar schools.

OfSTED – To date 24 Academies have had full OfSTED inspections. One Academy – Mossbourne – has been graded as outstanding in every single respect. In terms of their overall effectiveness, four have been graded as outstanding, 7 good, with the remaining 13 graded as satisfactory. Key to the future success of the Academies is their leadership and management. On this indicator, six Academies have been graded outstanding, 17 good and one satisfactory. That is 96% which have good or outstanding leadership, compared to 62% for secondary schools in general."

23 September 2008



Dear Vanessa Brown,

As a parent of a primary school child and a pre-schooler, who currently lives in the Falmer School catchment. I am writing to you, to express my opposition to the plans to close down the school and replace it with a city academy.

I have recently visited Falmer High School and was very impressed by how much the staff have managed to improve the school in the past few years; something that will no doubt continue if the school was left to carry on as usual. I strongly believe that the effective privatisation of the school will benefit neither the children or the local community. Personally I so strongly disagree with the academy programme I would refuse to send my children to such a school.

I am very concerned about the poor attempts at consultation by the council. Many parents in the area don't know about the proposal. It should be taken as given that those who are going to be the most affected by the proposed changes (i.e. the children and their families) should be the first to be consulted on what they think. This should include a consultation pack being sent to all families currently living in the Falmer catchment area.

Yours sincerely,

Paula Blackledge

Sent: 09 October 2008 20:08

To: Di Smith

Subject: Objection to notice to discontinue Falmer High School

Please find below my response to the notice to discontinue Falmer High School & my objection to its closure to enable the establishment of an Academy.

My husband & I supported our daughter's 1st preference of Falmer High School based on the excellent work done there by headteacher Stuart McLaughlin and his team of staff and their commitment of providing high quality learning opportunities for all. We specifically chose a state school because we want our daughter to experience a truly comprehensive education. We want our daughter to be educated in an institution under the control of the Local Authority, not within an academy directed by an unelected, unaccountable sponsor. The Academy proposals appear to offer no added benefits other than the promise of new modern buildings. Our daughter has excelled in a primary school building far older than the buildings at Falmer High. It is what goes on within the school not the bricks and mortar that make the difference. Your Summer 2008 No 1 Newsletter states that the Academy will offer improved results however reports show that nationally academies have not been a success with only 22% of academy pupils gaining 5 A*C passes whilst the national average was 44%. Recent figures released show that academies are excluding disproportionately high numbers of pupils, offloading difficult pupils to neighbouring schools. This will have a serious adverse effect on other schools in the city.

I do not believe with privatising our community schools by giving them academy status. Ed Balls recently announced 638 schools that must improve results and both Falmer High & Patcham are on this list. Along with 26 academies!!! We have already seen the steady rise of improved results at Falmer, give them the time and the money to continue doing so – they don't need academy status to achieve this. I believe that local residents have been misled into thinking that the only way Falmer will receive funding for new building is to accept the academy proposals, when BSF funding could be available within a couple of years & the school would remain under LA control. Schools should be under local authority control for the sake of the children and the staff. We know that current Falmer High staff will transfer with pay and conditions secure under TUPE regulations, but what happens when we then have a two-tier system when new staff are taken on? The lack of representation by parents, staff and the local authority is another major concern. **I therefore confirm that I am strongly against the proposal to close Falmer High School and replace it with an academy.**

Further to my previous email to Gil Sweetenham with my objection during the

informal consultation period, I have still not had any acknowledgement that my complaint within that email, has been noted. I therefore include a copy of that complaint, in 3 parts, & trust that I will receive acknowledgement that it has been noted.

1) Inadequate informal consultation.

I was fortunate to have received one of only 10, yes 10 copies of the consultation proposals leaflet that was sent to my daughter's primary school. (As confirmed within the document "Falmer Academy Project – Informal Consultation Distribution List). 10 leaflets for a school of 300+ children, a school within the Falmer High School catchment area, a school where over 50% of the current year 6 children will be moving to Falmer High School this coming September. When I questioned the Assistant Director of Schools, Gil Sweetenham at the public meeting on 10th June, he told me it was up to schools to inform parents. What, with 10 leaflets? Surely as a bare minimum the children due to start at Falmer High this September should have received direct information on the proposals and, as the Local Authority hold details of every child living in the catchment area **they** should have been responsible for getting this information to not only to these current year 6 children but every child living within the catchment area. They didn't. That may explain the poor turnout at the aforementioned meeting. I took 50 leaflets away from the meeting for parents of year 6 children at Coombe Road Primary and our headteacher later requested further copies for the rest of the school. In contrast, the Falmer newsletter (No1) was obviously distributed in greater numbers as these came home with the children – but not until the meeting had passed and close to the end of the consultation period. Considering the history of the SAR and the same complaint re lack of consultation I would have thought it would have been imperative for the local authority to get it right this time and save themselves further embarrassment.

2) I would like to register my disgust in the "Expression of Interest for an Academy" (EOI) document as found on the BHCC website. My husband & I, both educated, hardworking taxpayers are incredibly insulted at the presumption on page 8 of the document, **"...77 pupils from within the catchment area did not put Falmer School as a preference. It is reasonable to presume that the families of these pupils who chose schools outside the Falmer catchment area are the more motivated and aspirational families."** I am certain other parents that have chosen Falmer this year will be equally offended to read this. I request to be informed of who made this assumption please> Furthermore, why was this figure of 77 not broken down further to distinguish the amount of children following the sibling link to an out-of-catchment school? I therefore believe that this paragraph in the EOI to be misleading and inappropriate and would like this officially noted.

3) Finally, back to the EOI. There is reference on page 10 to the Falmer catchment area and "Projections for the next five years show the catchment area with at least 200 year 7 students and likely large building developments

at Preston Park Barracks (Lewes Road) and The Marina. Overall, the Y7 cohort living in this catchment area could rise from the present 200 to 250 from 2011 onwards."

As far as I am aware the Falmer catchment area is BN2 4 and part of BN1 9 postcodes. Throughout the SAR we heard how unfortunate the residents of The Marina are, living so far from their nearest school, yet now, somehow they appear to be included in projected numbers for a school a lot further away and totally out of catchment. Unless of course there are already plans afoot to amend the catchment areas? Something I am sure parents and residents citywide would be interested in hearing.

Jane Kistnasamy



Brighton & Hove

Subject: 2nd Falmer consultation submission

Dear Gil

I believe the 2nd consultation ends tomorrow (it's very hard to tell from the Council website, as details of the consultation are virtually invisible). Here is my submission.

In summary, you will not be surprised to hear that:

- I don't believe that Falmer School should close and then be redeveloped as an Academy.
- Alternative investment money is available from other sources.
- In the interests of democracy and real consultation, Falmer catchment parents should be allowed a vote on the proposal - just as Council tenants were, on a similar transfer of Council/community assets out of direct Council control.

Some of my reasons for this view are as follows:

1) I consider it profoundly undemocratic that any one individual (be it an Academy Sponsor or anyone else) should be allowed to wield so much power over the education of hundreds of (other peoples') children.

For example, Rod Aldridge acknowledged that he PERSONALLY had chosen the two specialisms, at the June consultation meeting at Falmer.

Why does the Sponsor have the right to decide what form my childrens' education is to take?!

This is even harder to swallow, when you consider that Aldridge will only be providing a MAXIMUM of 2 million pounds funding, which is spread over 5 years. (Experience from other Academies shows that Sponsors frequently do not supply even this much money.) Compare this to the 20-25 million pounds that will come from the taxpayer. Additionally, much of Aldridge's money will not even go directly to Falmer, but to its 'feeder' primaries instead.

2) There is a serious lack of transparency in the arrangements between the Sponsor and the DCSF, as the funding agreement between the two parties is (as I understand it) confidential.

3) I do not personally like the entrepreneurship specialism, and after hearing Aldridge speak, and reading the consultation documents, it seems to me that it will be little more than peddling an ideology, and indoctrinating my kids against my

wishes. (I very much doubt that this specialism will stretch to an objective assessment of the current banking crisis, for instance - and this is something that has major consequences for entrepreneurs!)

The specialism will not be a separate subject, but will permeate the entire curriculum (making it impossible to opt out of, if we so desire). Aldridge said that Maths can be taught in terms of analysing a balance sheet, and Geography in terms of comparing national economic performances.

Regardless of your political views, this is an EXTRAORDINARILY narrow approach to a subject. There will be many aspects of the curriculum that do not fit readily into the entrepreneurship theme, but despite asking, I have received no assurances that a TRULY balanced curriculum can be maintained.

As a result, I am seriously concerned about the quality of the education that will be available to my boys, and to all other pupils, at an Academy at Falmer.

4) I understand that Academies tend to show little or no improvement in results compared to mainstream schools, that they tend to offer the less challenging GNVQs rather than GCSEs, and that they are particularly poor at improving the performance of the weakest students. This is incredible given the resources that are channelled into them - they don't represent value for money!

I'm deeply afraid that much of the Academy pot of money will not actually be directly invested in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, to improve our education, but will be creamed off by private companies and highly paid consultants.

5) While the LEA will retain some Governors, coming out of direct LEA control will mean that an Academy is less accountable to parents.

We won't know the terms of the Sponsor's agreement with government, and if a parent is in dispute with an Academy, their only recourse is to appeal to a distant and inaccessible Secretary of State - where they presumably join a huge national queue of grievances demanding attention. Local services MUST be as close to local people as possible, if they are to stand any chance of being effective and fair.

6) Although I am all in favour of strong discipline, Academies seem to have enormously high exclusion rates, with children often being excluded for arbitrary and petty reasons.

They are a flagship policy, with intense pressure for results. Academies have an incentive to eject any pupil who might - in their perception - be potentially awkward. They are then dumped back out into the LEA system - and it's not as if Brighton and Hove is overflowing with secondary places!

I don't want my (or others') children to suffer as a result of a target-chasing social experiment.

7) A Falmer Academy is unnecessary.

I cannot understand why (according to the Council's own documents) no money has been invested in Falmer for 15 years or more, with the result that its buildings are now not fit for purpose.

Leaving that aside, the Council also says that Building Schools for a Future money could become available as early as 2011. This could achieve the improvements in school infrastructure promised by the Academy, probably more cheaply, and without the Sponsor's strings attached.

8) As a gymnastics group pointed out at the June meeting, Falmer's buildings are already extremely well used by local people. Council representatives agreed with this, stating that the school is unusually well-endowed with halls and other meeting spaces.

However, if (e.g.) the South Building goes, there will be a net loss of such abundant community space. For instance, the consultation documents offer no assurances that there will still be room for the two nurseries. This is completely at odds with the rhetoric about the community being at the heart of the proposed Academy.

I hope that the Council will see sense, and abandon this dangerous plan.

At the very least, it must be put to a vote of catchment parents. I can see no genuine argument against such a vote.

Yours

Dominic Franklin

Brighton Schools Not For Sale



Falmer High School - Let there be a genuine debate.

If you wish there to be a genuine debate about the future of Falmer School please sign this letter and post it to:

Vanessa Brown, cabinet member for Children and Young People,
King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove
BN3 2LS.

Please take the time to do this. A City Academy means privatising Falmer High School and has severe long term implications for the school and the community. Parents at the very least deserve to know the facts.

Dear Vanessa Brown,

I am writing to express my concern at the plans to close Falmer High school and replace it with a City Academy leaving the school in the hands of an entrepreneur businessman with very little direct experience of education.

The city academy scheme has not proved to be a success throughout the country and can involve handing over control of education to unaccountable business and religious organisations. City academies have seen huge increases in exclusions and staff turnover when they have been introduced.

Despite this, and the fact that all teachers unions oppose the scheme the councils 'consultation' so far has only shown the pro-academy argument.

I am disappointed that parents of feeder primary schools have not been issued with individual letters asking them what they think. I also understand that the responses to the first stage of the consultation the majority of views expressed were against the City Academy and yet it seems it is going ahead regardless of this.

If a consultation is to be effective it needs to provide a balanced view of the pros and cons of proposed changes and so far this has not happened. With this in mind I request that you hold a ballot of the current and prospective parents in the school's catchment area so that all the issues surrounding the City Academy scheme can be debated openly and the views of parents taken into account. I understand Sheffield Council are holding a ballot over plan for an Academy in their city and see no reason why Brighton parents should not be given the same right.

I hope that councillors have enough confidence in their plans for the school to allow for this basic democratic right of parents to be observed.

Yours sincerely,



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MRS J.R. BUNKER

APPENDIX 6



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RECEIVED
13 OCT 2008
APPENDIX 6

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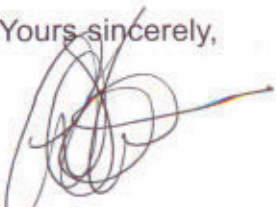
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