

**Falmer Academy Project**  
**Outcome of the informal consultation carried out between**  
**19 May 2008 and 4 July 2008**

## **Background**

During the seven week "informal" consultation period, 400 full consultation documents were issued and 7000 summary documents were distributed (See Appendix 3). In addition to the initial distribution of summary leaflets to primary schools, 750 were provided to Patcham Junior School and Coombe Road Primary School upon their request. The Council's website carried the full consultation document for the entire period of the consultation with the provision for an on-line questionnaire response.

The first edition of the Academy Newsletter which was specifically designed to answer many of the common questions that were arising was also distributed. Although the newsletter does not constitute part of the consultation, it boldly stated that a consultation was taking place and gave information on how to engage in it. A total of 2700 newsletters were distributed, 900 to the parents of pupils at Falmer High School and 1800 to the parents of the 7 feeder primary schools.

The full consultation document and newsletter were also made available electronically to the staff at Falmer High School as well as in hard copy.

All of the responses received have been placed in the Members' Library.

## **Outcome**

Of the 400 full consultation documents distributed, 79 have been returned, 59 of which were returned on line and 78 of which are from named or designated recipients. In addition, two letters and two emails were received. Letters of support were received from the 3 further education colleges and the Learning & Skills Council. Two emails were received, one in support of the proposal and one in strong disagreement. Of those where a designation was indicated, responses were received from:

- 14 Falmer staff
- 3 Falmer governors
- 1 Falmer parent

- 15 other school staff
- 6 other school governors
- 16 other school parents
- 20 local residents
- 3 others

Of the 7000 summary leaflets, 42 were returned, of which 5 indicated who they were from.

The results of the informal consultation period:

Full consultation questionnaires completed:79

The proposal is to close Falmer High School on 31 August 2010 so that it can be replaced by the Falmer Academy from 1 September 2010 on the same school site.

(1) Do you agree with the proposal?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1 5	1 4	6	9	35

(2) Do you have any comments about the proposal?

Besides a range of individual comments, the main points made by the majority were:

- Pointing to the potential for the Academy to bring about further improvement and increased opportunity and choice. An emphasis on the benefits of the proposal.
- Opposition to the Academy in principle on grounds of the removal from local authority control, lack of accountability and representing poor value for money for the community in respect of the sponsor's involvement
- There were also some concerns raised on the positions of staff and the impact on other school provision.

(3) Do you support the change in the age range the school caters for from 11-16 year olds to 11-18 year olds?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2	1	17	5	16

2

9

- (4) What effect do you think having the Academy in Brighton and Hove would have?

The comments were broadly split between those who welcomed the increased choice at post-16 along with greater opportunities for pupils in the Falmer area and those who felt there was sufficient post-16 provision in Brighton & Hove currently and as a consequence felt the post-16 provision superfluous.

- (5) & (6) Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like the Council to consider?

- Respondents raised a series of issues regarding the sponsor and accountability and many felt that the Council should be providing the new school from its own resources.
- Comments were received about the need to engage the whole community in Falmer about this proposal, to give greater publicity to the project and provide more information.
- There was also support for the progress the school has already made and for the professionalism and hard work of the headteacher and staff.
- It was suggested that the school should work closely with the primary sector in order to maximise the benefits to the Falmer community of the new school.
- Comments were made about the proposed stadium and its potential impact on the community and this project, both in positive and negative terms.

- (7) What is your interest in the proposal?

**a. Falmer High School**

School Governor

Senior Teacher

Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other staff member  Parent/Guardian of pupil  Pupil

**b. Other schools**

School Governor  Senior Teacher  Teacher

Other staff member  Parent/Guardian of pupil  Pupil

**c. Others**

Local resident  Other  (Please say what your interest is)

Of the 42 summary leaflets returned:

**1. Do you agree with the proposal?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="17"/>

**2. Do you support the change in the age range the school caters for from 11-16 year olds to 11-18 year olds?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="12"/>

**3. If there is anything else you would like to say, please add your comments here.**

- 12 responses gave general support to the Academy or thought it would substantially improve the school
- 6 responses raised concerns/objections to the Academy on grounds of accountability and privatisation
- 6 responses raised concerns on the impact in the Brighton & Hove area of the additional sixth form places
- 3 responses raised concerns about the lack of choice in the Falmer area, in part related to the Admissions system

**Conclusion**

Of the total of 7400 printed consultation documents issued (in addition to the Council's interactive website questionnaire) a total of 121 representing 2% were returned. In addition, two letters and two emails were received. The 125 responses received can be summarised as 54 supporting and 62 not supporting the Academy proposal with 9 not expressing an opinion. This level of response 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 3 of this report be enacted.

