

CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CLOSE PENT VALLEY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE



Kent County Council would like to hear your views on a proposal to close Pent Valley Technology College. It is proposed that the school closes for current Years 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 from 31 August 2016 and that the current Year 10 pupils remain on site until July 2017 to complete their GCSE studies. It is proposed that Pent Valley Technology College closes permanently from 31 August 2017.



Information about how to respond to this consultation is contained within this document.

Public Meeting: Monday 18 January at 7 pm
Pent Valley Technology College
Surrenden Road, Folkestone, CT19 4ED

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is that Pent Valley Technology College would close from September 2016 for all pupils except the present Year 10, and for all pupils from September 2017. This would allow the present Year 10 pupils to complete their final year of GCSE studies at Pent Valley, with some staff being retained to deliver the courses and provide the pastoral support needed.

It is proposed that pupils in years 7 to 9 continue their statutory education in other local schools. In order to reassure parents that their child will have a school place in the event that Pent Valley closes, pupils in years 7 to 9 have been allocated places from September 2016 at either Brockhill Park Performing Arts College or Folkestone Academy.

Current Year 11 pupils are naturally looking at their post 16 options, which for many would involve changing educational setting. Pupils will be offered specific one-to-one support to enable them to make suitable decisions on their post 16 pathways in other local schools and the FE College.

Current Year 12 pupils will be supported on an individual basis to secure their transfer to suitable courses to complete their post-16 studies.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Pent Valley Technology College is a non-selective co-educational Foundation School with a Published Admission Number of 180 pupils for September 2016. Since April 2015 the school has been well led and managed by The Swale Academies Trust on behalf of the Governing Body and the Local Authority. The Local Authority has recognised that the leadership of Swale Academies Trust has achieved significant improvements in a short period of time. However, while the improvements are good for the pupils currently at the school, the progress achieved will not be enough to mitigate the issues outlined below that have led to the proposal to close Pent Valley.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in January 2013 and was judged to be 'Good'. There has however been a significant drop in standards since this date leading the Local Authority to issue a Formal Warning Notice in February 2015. Recent GCSE results show that there has continued to be a decline in attainment and results have plummeted to 15% of students achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and Maths. This is below the results achieved in any year since 2004, and far below the Government's floor target of 40%.

The school has steadily become less popular with parents. In 2010 the number of pupils in Years 7-11 was 1026; as at October 2015 it was 417 pupils. The pupil numbers have fallen year on year, with smaller intakes being admitted annually (see table 1 below). The current Year 11 is the largest cohort, with 122 pupils, while the smallest cohort is the current year 7 with 43 pupils. For 2016 only 54 first preferences were received. While this is a small increase on the 31 first preferences made last year it is not enough to halt the decline in pupil numbers, as 122 pupils leave Year 11. The school has an admission capacity of 900 pupils for Years 7-11 and therefore is operating at 46% of its capacity as of October 2015. That will decrease to 38% in 2016-17 if the school remains open. Table 2 below shows future forecast numbers for the school, which shows a continuing decrease until 2019-20.

Table 1: Pent Valley Technology School Roll 2010-2016

| | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 | Year 12 | Year 13 | Total 7-11 | Total 7-13 |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|------------|
| 2010-11 | 145 | 180 | 224 | 234 | 243 | 151 | 127 | 1026 | 1304 |
| 2011-12 | 125 | 152 | 181 | 220 | 230 | 123 | 99 | 908 | 1130 |
| 2012-13 | 117 | 128 | 163 | 173 | 215 | 125 | 108 | 796 | 1029 |
| 2013-14 | 87 | 109 | 127 | 169 | 177 | 139 | 94 | 669 | 902 |
| 2014-15 | 58 | 84 | 110 | 130 | 165 | 126 | 95 | 547 | 768 |
| 2015-16 | 43 | 63 | 79 | 110 | 122 | 85 | 73 | 417 | 575 |

Information from Planning Provision Toolkit 2015

Table 2: Pent Valley Technology School Forecast Roll 2016-2020

| | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 | Year 12 | Year 13 | Total 7-11 | Total 7-13 |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|------------|
| 2016-17 | 71 | 43 | 63 | 79 | 110 | 63 | 57 | 366 | 486 |
| 2017-18 | 78 | 71 | 43 | 63 | 79 | 57 | 48 | 334 | 439 |
| 2018-19 | 74 | 78 | 71 | 43 | 63 | 41 | 43 | 329 | 413 |
| 2019-20 | 83 | 74 | 78 | 71 | 43 | 33 | 31 | 349 | 413 |

Information from KCC Management Information

Similarly to Years 7 to 11, there has been a significant decline in the numbers of pupils accessing Post-16 places at Pent Valley. This is forecast to continue (see table 3 below). The percentage of pupils who choose to transfer into the 6th form from Year 11 is low with around 50% transferring into Year 12, and 40% staying from Year 11 through to Year 13. This has impacted negatively on the Post-16 curriculum that can be offered.

Table 3: Pent Valley Post-16 Roll Numbers 2011-16 and Forecast Roll 2016-20

| | Actual Numbers | | | | | Forecast Numbers | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
| Year 11 | 227 | 214 | 173 | 162 | 122 | 110 | 79 | 63 | 43 |
| Year 12 | 118 | 99 | 121 | 99 | 85 | 63 | 57 | 41 | 33 |
| Year 13 | 89 | 100 | 83 | 80 | 73 | 64 | 48 | 43 | 31 |
| Year 12-13 roll total | 207 | 199 | 204 | 179 | 158 | 127 | 105 | 84 | 64 |

As school budgets are predominantly based on pupil numbers, annually the school has needed to respond to a diminishing budget. It will need to do so for each of the next few years, as larger cohorts leave, and smaller Year 7 cohorts are admitted. This has impacted on the curriculum offer, support for pupils, and we see the situation becoming more challenging for the school to deliver appropriate education for its pupils. The school has a sizeable budget deficit of £552,487 in the current year and this is projected to rise to £2,524,027 by 2017-18. This deficit has arisen despite significant action during the past years to reduce costs. The declining school budget will be insufficient to sustain the current staffing levels, and the necessary reductions in staffing will impact further on the curriculum and the quality of education. Delivering a broad and balanced, high quality curriculum in the circumstances is likely to prove impossible.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

Looking to the future, we recognise that we will need to have some Secondary school provision in this part of the Shepway area. A slow, small increase in Year 7 numbers is expected in the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. From 2019/20 this will mean an additional two

forms of entry. The options are to permanently expand other schools or to re-commission new Secondary provision. In preparation the Local Authority's preferred option is to have a new school on the Pent Valley site by September 2018. We aim to have a fresh start, with a new offer for parents and children.

It is expected, therefore, that the school buildings would be retained, but no decision as to their future use has been made. Table 4 below shows the number of places needed in year 7 in the Shepway district by September 2019.

Table 4: Forecast Number of Year 7 Places needed in Shepway should Pent Valley close

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of Year 7 Places needed in the District | 0 | 0 | 3 | 75 | 81 |

NB: These figures assume Brockhill Park and Folkestone Academy continue to admit 252 and 300 pupils into Year 7 in future years

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the drop in standards, the very significant drop in pupil numbers, reflecting loss of parental confidence in the school, and the serious budget deficit coupled with future pupil number projections in the Shepway area over the next few years suggest the closure of Pent Valley Technology College is necessary.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 6 January to 3 February 2016 | Public Consultation period |
| Monday 18 January at 7pm | Public Meeting at the school |
| 17 February 2016 | Report back to KCC's Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee on the outcome of the consultation |
| 25 February to 24 March 2016 | The Cabinet Member for Education decides whether to proceed with the proposal. If KCC proceeds, it will publish a Public Notice in a local newspaper and at the school. During this four week period, any person may send in a response supporting, objecting to, or commenting on the proposal. |
| 24 March 2016 | Cabinet Member for Education final decision following Public Notice period. |
| September 2016 | Proposed closure for all Year Groups except current Year 10 |
| September 2017 | Proposed final closure |

There are a number of ways you can let us have your views:

1. Complete and return the response form overleaf to: Lee Round, Area Schools Organisation Officer, Education and Young People's Services, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, TN24 8XU
2. Or Email your comments to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk
3. Or come to the Public Meeting at the school on Monday 18 January at 7pm

You can view the consultation information online at: www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

We will note all you say, but will not be able to respond individually to response forms, letters or emails.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 12pm 03 February 2016

Do you agree with the proposal to close Pent Valley Technology College?

YES **NO**

I am a: * Pupil, Parent/Carer, Member of Staff, Governor, * Please delete as appropriate or other interested party.....(please state your interest)

Name

Address

Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.

Your comments....

Please continue overleaf if necessary.....

We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment to see if the proposal could affect anyone unfairly. We welcome your views on the assumptions we have made and the conclusions we have drawn. To view the document, go to www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations