

Educational Provision in Gamlingay

Planning for the Future

April 2011

Consultation Document

Introduction

Cambridgeshire County Council, the local Children's Services Authority, has decided to review the educational provision it makes for children and young people living in the catchment area of Gamlingay Village College and Gamlingay First School.

There are two key reasons for reviewing the current arrangements:

- the need to respond to a number of specific challenges faced by Gamlingay Village College;
- the need to explore whether a change from the three-tier education system of First, Middle and Upper schools that applies in Gamlingay, to the two-tier system of primary and secondary schools to be found in the rest of Cambridgeshire would help address these challenges.

Our main aim is to secure and sustain high-quality educational provision for all children and young people in the Gamlingay area. We firmly believe that doing nothing will not achieve this aim.

We have produced this consultation paper to help you understand why we believe this to be the case. The paper:

- sets out a range of structural options for securing improvements in the quality of the educational provision available to children and young people who attend Gamlingay Village College and the standards they achieve;
- identifies what we believe to be the main advantages and disadvantages of each of these options and our preferred option; and
- sets out the immediate next steps in the review process. This includes how you can find out more and how you can tell us what you think about the options we have identified.

The principal focus of this consultation is on the changes needed as a result of the challenges faced by Gamlingay Village College.

Background

The village of Gamlingay is in Cambridgeshire, in the South Cambridgeshire District, but very close to the border with the neighbouring Children's Services Authority, Central Bedfordshire. There are two schools in the village, Gamlingay First School and Gamlingay Village College. They have a common catchment area which comprises: East Hatley, Everton Heath, Gamlingay, Hatley St George and Tetworth. The schools are organised on the educational model which exists in Central Bedfordshire – of First, Middle and Upper schools – and the Village College feeds into Stratton Upper School, in Biggleswade, which is in Central Bedfordshire.

Gamlingay First School is a Community school for pupils aged 4-9 years (Reception, Years 1- 4) and has an annual pupil intake figure, or published admission number (PAN) of 45 (1.5 forms of entry (FE)) providing an overall capacity of 225 places.

Gamlingay Village College is a Foundation school for pupils aged 9-13 (Years 5-8) and has a PAN of 62 (2 FE) providing an overall capacity of 248 places.

Stratton Upper School is a Community school for pupils aged 13–18 (Years 9–13) and has a PAN of 300 (10 FE) providing a statutory-age capacity of 900, plus sixth form provision. The school is currently consulting on converting to Academy status.

The need for immediate change to address the specific challenges faced by Gamlingay Village College

We have identified the need to consider potential structural options to respond to the issues identified by the recent inspection of Gamlingay Village College by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). The school was inspected on 9-10 February 2011, and was judged to require special measures. This is because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. Significant improvement is required in relation to:

- increasing attainment and improving pupils' progress to at least national averages in all subjects, but especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of leadership;
- the quality of teaching, in order to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons.

The local authority is putting in significant management and educational support to address these issues. However, we are also required by Ofsted to explore the scope for the school to be closed or federated with other schools, taking into account the number of surplus places available in better-performing local schools in the surrounding area.

Responding to the challenges faced by Gamlingay Village College

We have identified the following options for addressing these challenges:

Option 1

- Retain the current three-tier structure of Gamlingay First School and Gamlingay Village College, feeding into Stratton Upper School, in Biggleswade.
- Establish very close working links between the First School and the Village College for the primary year groups; and with Stratton Upper for the secondary year groups.
- Develop formal federation proposals, aimed at improving educational performance and cost-effectiveness. This could include the possibility of a hard federation with Stratton Upper School.

Option 2

- Establish Gamlingay First School as an all-through primary school.
- Close Gamlingay Village College.
- Include Gamlingay in the catchment area of one of the neighbouring Cambridgeshire secondary schools which has surplus capacity.
- Provide for students to continue their post-16 education in Cambridgeshire.

Option 3

- Establish Gamlingay First School as an all-through primary school.
- Close Gamlingay Village College.
- Include Gamlingay in the catchment area of the proposed new secondary school which is aimed to be established in Cambourne to open in September 2013.
- Provide for students to continue their post-16 education in Cambridgeshire.

Previous review work undertaken:

We believe it is important to provide some information about an option that is not included in this consultation paper, in order that parents might have the full picture. The future organisation of secondary education in South West Cambridgeshire and the pattern of education in Gamlingay were considered in depth by the County Council's Children and Young People's Policy Development Group (PDG) over a series of meetings in 2010. The PDG is a non-decision-making group of County Councillors, Teacher Association and Diocesan representatives that advises the Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, on issues of relevance to his portfolio area.

The PDG considered a number of educational options which had been evaluated and costed in detail. These options included the possible establishment of an 11-16 secondary school in Gamlingay. The evaluation showed that it would be extremely difficult to establish a secondary school in Gamlingay which met even the County Council's minimum size guidance of 4 FE (620 places). The minimum size is important because the cost per pupil of small secondary schools is considerably more than for larger ones, and, in addition to general equity considerations, establishing such a school at a time of severe financial constraints would be extremely difficult to justify.

The only way to achieve viability would have been either to change the Gamlingay catchment area significantly and transport children to the school from other areas of Cambridgeshire, including Cambourne and Great Gransden, or to recommend a change to Gamlingay Village College's catchment area to include some Central Bedfordshire schools, namely, Potton Lower School and Burgoyne Middle School.

In the first case, the PDG did not feel that it could support the transportation of large numbers of children from Cambourne to Gamlingay, for both cost and environmental reasons; and in the second, Central Bedfordshire indicated that the Authority would not support any formal proposal from Cambridgeshire to make Potton Lower and Burgoyne Middle feeder schools for Gamlingay Village College. The option of an all-through secondary school to serve Gamlingay is, therefore, not included here.

As far as future need is concerned, NHS birth data indicates that the number of children born in the Gamlingay catchment area will reduce from a predicted 40 in-catchment children requiring a Reception place in September 2011 to 29 in 2014. These numbers will, to some extent, be balanced in the future by new housing development in the village, keeping the in-catchment numbers broadly at the same level, as the first development is planned for completion in 2014.

Further details relating to the three broad options on which we are consulting are set out below.

OPTIONS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
OPTION 1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the current three-tier structure of Gamlingay First School and Gamlingay Village College, feeding into Stratton Upper School, in Biggleswade. Establish very close working links between the First School and the Village College for the primary year groups; and with Stratton Upper for the secondary year groups. Develop formal federation¹ proposals, aimed at improving educational performance and cost-effectiveness. This could include the possibility of a hard federation with Stratton Upper School. 	<p>Minimal structural change, so arrangements could be implemented very quickly.</p> <p>Links Gamlingay Village College closely with two well-performing schools.</p> <p>Provides improved opportunities for strengthening leadership, management and teaching arrangements in a cost-effective manner.</p> <p>As Stratton Upper is a 13-18 school, this provides the opportunity for children to receive their sixth-form education there without transferring elsewhere.</p>	<p>Retains the three-tier educational structure for Gamlingay, when all other Cambridgeshire schools are all-through primaries or secondaries.</p> <p>Minimal change, which means that the arrangements might not be seen as capable of delivering the necessary improvements, and might therefore, be unacceptable to Ofsted.</p> <p>There could be difficulty with the recruitment and retention of staff at the Village College.</p> <p>The impact on the First School of parents moving children to other schools, due to the circumstances of special measures at the Village College, could be significant in lowering pupil numbers and impacting on budget, staffing and class organisation.</p> <p>This option has the capacity to isolate one of the schools in a three-tier arrangement, if federation proposals were not agreed by all of the governing bodies.</p>
OPTION 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Gamlingay First School as an all-through primary school. Close Gamlingay Village College. Include Gamlingay in the catchment area of one of the neighbouring Cambridgeshire secondary schools which has surplus capacity. (Further information on the relevant secondary schools is included in Appendices 1 and 2.) Provide for students to continue their post-16 education in Cambridgeshire. 	<p>Enables the First School, which is a high-performing, popular school to expand.</p> <p>Closes Gamlingay Village College, a low-performing school.</p> <p>Brings Gamlingay into line with the Cambridgeshire two-tier primary and secondary educational model.</p> <p>Depending on the choice of secondary school, this has the capacity to be a popular option with parents and the local community.</p>	<p>This option could not be implemented formally until September 2012. Interim arrangements would, therefore, be needed for one academic year.</p> <p>There would need to be significant capital investment in establishing an all-through 4-11 primary school.</p> <p>This option would increase transport costs, as transport would be required from Year 7 not Year 9.</p> <p>Depending on the choice of secondary school, this has the capacity to be an unpopular option with parents and the local community.</p>

¹ A federation normally involves two or more schools agreeing to enter into a formal partnership. There would be one governing body which would have collective responsibility for the schools, but each school would retain its own individual identity and be the subject of a separate Ofsted inspection. Very recent information indicates that a federation can set a single budget. Such an arrangement, therefore, provides significant opportunities for joint working and the cost-effective use of resources.

OPTIONS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
(The arrangements would vary with the choice of school. Further details in Appendix 1.)		
OPTION 3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Gamlingay First School as an all-through primary school. • Close Gamlingay Village College. • Include Gamlingay in the catchment area of the proposed new secondary school which is aimed to be established in Cambourne to open in September 2013. • Provide for students to continue their post-16 education in Cambridgeshire. (Further details are included in Appendix 1.) 	<p>Enables the First School, which is a high-performing, popular school to expand.</p> <p>Closes Gamlingay Village College, a low-performing school.</p> <p>Brings Gamlingay into line with the Cambridgeshire two-tier primary and secondary educational model.</p> <p>A new secondary school would provide a fresh start for Gamlingay children.</p>	<p>The new secondary school at Cambourne will not open until September 2013, at the earliest. Interim arrangements would, therefore, be needed for at least two academic years.</p> <p>There would need to be significant capital investment in establishing an all-through 4-11 primary school.</p> <p>As a new school, there is no track record on which to base an educational judgement.</p> <p>This option would increase transport costs, as transport would be required from Year 7 not Year 9.</p> <p>The capital funding for the proposed 5FE (750 place) secondary school to serve the needs of Cambourne is already heavily dependent on borrowing. Any increase in size would mean that additional borrowing would be required.</p> <p>A competition for awarding the contract for the design and building of a 5FE school has already been run and awarded, and the timescale for completion by 2013 is already tight. Any amendment to the arrangements could cause significant delay.</p> <p>Note: This option would cause severe discontent on the part of the governors and parents of Barnabas Oley Primary School in Great Gransden. Barnabas Oley have already been informed that feeding into the new secondary school in Cambourne is not possible, because of the capital funding difficulties, and Great Gransden is significantly nearer to Cambourne than Gamlingay.</p>

Preferred Option

Having considered each of the identified options in detail, our preference would be for Option 2, with the inclusion of Gamlingay in the catchment area of **Bassingbourn Village College**.

This would involve the expansion of Gamlingay First School to become an all-through primary school and the closure of Gamlingay Village College. As far as Bassingbourn Village College is concerned, the outcome of its most recent Ofsted inspection, which took place in January

2010, indicated that it was a satisfactory school with satisfactory capacity to improve. It was judged to have good features, and its students attain well above the national average at GCSE. The school currently has 674 children on roll, but has capacity to admit a greater number, because there are fewer children in its catchment area in the future.

In addition, Gamlingay is in South Cambridgeshire, in the Bassingbourn, Melbourn, Comberton and Gamlingay locality, and Gamlingay First School already has strong links with the Bassingbourn cluster of schools. These links include regular meetings of the headteachers concerned, joint training days and collective funding of special projects.

If this option were to be taken forward, the earliest it could be formally implemented would be September 2012. Interim arrangements would, therefore, need to be put in place for the September 2011-12 academic year. These:

- would involve the support arrangements for the management and leadership at the Village College being placed on a longer-term footing;
- would be likely to include the current Year 4 cohort continuing to be educated at the First School for an additional year, rather than transferring in September 2011, which offers the potential additional benefit of Gamlingay Village College being able to focus attention on Years 6-8, in preparation for future transfer;
- could include the option of the current Year 6 at the Village College being given the opportunity to transfer to a Cambridgeshire secondary school in September 2011.

Consideration would also be given, in line with parental preference, to time-limited arrangements for the continued provision of free transport to Stratton Upper School for the younger siblings of students currently attending the school.

Detailed discussion of the interim arrangements would take place with all of the schools concerned.

How you can find out more

We must stress that, whilst we have a preferred option, we want to find out the views of as many people as possible about the identified options for change before any decisions are taken. We have arranged a series of meetings which will enable the options to be discussed and for any questions which people might have about the options, or the next steps in the process, to be answered.

In line with our normal practice, we will consult fully with staff and their union representatives and produce detailed guidance on employment issues.

The details of the meetings are set out below.

Date	Time	Venue	Audience
			Gamlingay First School:
Tuesday, 26 April 2011	4.00 pm	Gamlingay First School	Staff employed at Gamlingay First School and their union representatives
	5.30 pm	Gamlingay First School	Governing Body of Gamlingay First School
	7.00 pm	Gamlingay First School	Parents/carers of children attending Gamlingay First School and living in the school's catchment area, and parents/carers of children attending the pre-schools, or of children of pre-school age living in the catchment area.

Date	Time	Venue	Audience
			Gamlingay Village College:
Wednesday, 27 April 2011	4.00 pm	Gamlingay Village College	Staff employed at Gamlingay Village College and their union representatives
	5.30 pm	Gamlingay Village College	Governing Body of Gamlingay Village College
	7.00 pm	Gamlingay Village College	Parents/carers of children and young people attending Gamlingay Village College.

A meeting will also be arranged for the local community of Gamlingay, including the Parish Council, the date for which will be arranged and publicised as soon as possible; and discussions will be held, as appropriate, with representatives of Stratton Upper School, Bassingbourn Village College, the Comberton Educational Trust and the Longsands Learning Partnership.

If you wish to make any written comments, we would like to receive these by **Wednesday, 25 May 2011**. A comment sheet is included for your use, which you can either return by post or email, to the addresses provided on the comment sheet.

What Happens Next?

We will analyse in detail all the comments we receive from people who attend the consultation meetings and/or who choose to put their views in writing.

After careful consideration of these comments, we will decide which of the options we will recommend for implementation. We will then report the outcome to everyone who has received this consultation document. However, we will give priority to informing the leadership, staff and governors of Gamlingay Village College and Gamlingay First School ahead of all other interested parties.

A report will then be presented to the County Council's Cabinet on 14 June 2011, seeking approval to proceed to the next stage. This next stage would include the publication of formal proposals that would be the subject of statutory public consultation.

Neighbouring Cambridgeshire Secondary Schools to Gamlingay : Relevant Information

School	Status	Post-16 Educational Arrangements	Distance from Gamlingay (rounded)	Ofsted Category	% GCSE (5 A* - C, inc. Maths & English) 2010
Bassingbourn Village College	Foundation	11-16 school, part of Cambridge/ South Cambs (C/SC) provision	11 miles	Satisfactory, with good features	69
Comberton Village College	Academy	11-18 school, part of C/SC provision	11 miles	Outstanding	82
Proposed Cambourne secondary	Will be Academy or Free School	11-16 school, part of C/SC provision	10 miles	N/A	N/A
Longsands School	Foundation*	11-18 school+	9 miles	Good, with outstanding features	67
St Neots Community College (SNCC)	Foundation*	11-18 school+	8 miles	Satisfactory, with good and outstanding features.	36
Notes:	*Longsands and SNCC, who together form a federation known as the Longsands Learning Partnership, are consulting on conversion to Academy status.	+Longsands and SNCC work together to plan sixth form provision.			
Comparable information for Stratton Upper School	Community, consulting on conversion to Academy status	13-18 school	6 miles	Good, with outstanding features	56

Cambridgeshire Secondaries : Forecast Pupil Numbers in the Catchment for each September											
School	Published Admission Number		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bassingbourn	150		105	112	98	107	90	102	88	130	119
Comberton	300		306 ²	318	354	360	362	396	395	427	433
Longsands	290		289	310	280	319	306	305	317	340	413
St Neots CC	232		148 ³	157	132	114	129	132	124	135	154

² The pupil numbers for Comberton take into account the planned increased housing development in Cambourne.

³ Even though there is currently spare capacity at St Neots Community College, it has been agreed that the two St Neots secondary schools, which together form the Longsands Learning Partnership, should expand to meet the significant future housing development planned for the town. This will require an additional 4-6 FE.

Educational Provision in Gamlingay

Consultation Comment Sheet

Name: _____ (please print)

Please place a tick in the appropriate box to indicate if you are a:

Member of staff * _____

Governor * _____

** Please name the school*

Parent of Child at Gamlingay Village College

Parent of a Child at Gamlingay First School

Parent of a Younger Child

Pupil at Gamlingay Village College

Pupil at Gamlingay First School

Other Member of Community

Professional Association / Trade Union

Partner Organisation / Education Provider

COMMENT YOU WISH TO MAKE

Please continue overleaf, if you wish to.

Return to:
Suzanne Nelson
Children and Young People's Services
Box No. CC1209
Castle Court
Shire Hall
Cambridge
CB3 0AP

The consultation document and response form are also available on Cambridgeshire County Council's website via the following link:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/schools/planning/>

and can be returned electronically to gamlingayreview@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The deadline for receipt of comments is **25 May 2011**