

Consultation Responses Analysis

A total of 683 responses were received to the consultation undertaken between 6 April and 25 May 2011.

These were in the form of emails, letters and completed comment sheets.

Not everyone who responded stated a clear preference for one of the options for change, nor provided information in respect of their particular interest in the proposed changes i.e. whether they were a parent, member of staff, pupil or member of the community.

Of those who did provide this information, the greatest number identified themselves as members of the community or with a community interest – 326 in total.

A further 142 people identified themselves as parents of pupils at Gamlingay Village College, whilst 74 identified themselves as parents of pupils at Gamlingay First School.

A number of parents have children at both schools.

Of those who expressed a clear preference for one of the options for change, the vast majority, 611 named Option 1, Federation with Stratton Upper School, as their choice. 54 people expressed a preference for Option 2, with 4 choosing Option 3.

Option 1

The Governing Body of Gamlingay Village College wrote to say that “The Governors of Gamlingay Village College have liaised extensively with the local community, including parents, other local residents, Stratton Upper School, Gamlingay First School and our other feeder schools. The overwhelming opinion expressed to us has been that parents wish to keep their children in the village until the age of 13 and then for those children to be able to transfer to Stratton Upper School in Bedfordshire, which is our nearest provider of secondary education. We have also heard that while parents want educational standards to improve, they recognise that their children are happy, safe and cared for at Gamlingay Village College, a fact which was recognised in the recent Ofsted report.

The Governors of GVC have carefully assessed the three options which the Local Authority have put forward for consideration. Governors wish to support the option which best benefits the children of Gamlingay and the surrounding area. We believe that working closely with the LA to implement Option 1, including Federation with Stratton Upper School, is the best way to raise educational standards and meet the wishes of parents for local education.We feel strongly that our young people should not be affected by the county boundaries but should be offered what is in their best interests.”

Examples of other views expressed in support of Option 1 are:

“I feel strongly that Options 2 and 3 significantly reduce choice. The current situation allows parents to choose to send their children to an 11 to 16 school in Cambridgeshire or to continue at GVC and send their children to Stratton at the end of year 8. The proposed closure options

remove these choices and would force parents to send their children a significant distance in order to continue their education at the end of year 6.... We strongly support Option 1, the continuation of GVC in its current form with the improvements, that have started, to be allowed to continue with support from the LEA. We hope the LEA can see what a valuable commodity GVC school provides to parents, children and the local community and that they will give the staff the support they need in order to enable the school to come out of special measures."

"I have two sons both of whom have attended Gamlingay Village College. One has now moved on to upper school, the younger is now in Year 8 at GVC. GVC is not our catchment school we chose it as the very best option for each of them... Please vote for Option 1 keeping Gamlingay Village College with additional managerial support, so that future generations of children can benefit as mine have."

Option 2

The Governing Body of Gamlingay First School wrote to say that *"we believe that Option 2, with the First School becoming a through primary and then feeding into Bassingbourn Village College, offers the best option for all the children currently educated in our school."* The reasons given for this view included:

"In the short-term we believe that this is the most likely way of ensuring the best outcomes for children currently in our year 4 cohort. We know that the vast majority of children currently in year 4 are happy, hardworking and making good progress. We want to do the best we can to ensure that this continues for all of their primary education."

"Gamlingay is a thriving, flourishing community and we believe that option 2 would all the community a fresh start and allow all of the children within the community the quickest solution to accessing good quality education and provide consistency within an uncertain future."

"We prefer option 2 to option 3 because it would allow children to move on to an established, thriving school with whom we already have links. It would provide the opportunity for a far better transition programme for children leaving our school and moving onto their Secondary education."

Examples of others view expressed in support of Option 2 are:

"Regrettable as it is, it is imperative that the Council implement the option 2 which has been proposed. OFSTED have shown that GVC has no capacity to improve and the report is 'bleak'. My child is blissfully happy at GFS and as this is a good school and the headteacher is committed to providing the best education for all pupils. By allowing the children to stay at GFS there are more options available for them for secondary."

I would like to make clear from the outset that our preferred option for education is Option 2 – we firmly believe that the two-tier system delivers a better outcome for children and that Gamlingay should be offered this system in line with all other Cambridgeshire children. Our eldest child is thriving at Gamlingay First School and we are delighted with his progress at all levels – it is a very good school which is getting better and better thanks to the work of the truly excellent Headmaster, Mr Jonathan Newman. I have no doubt that the school would continue to flourish if it were to become a 4-11 Primary School and that this would clearly benefit the children of

Gamlingay allowing them 2 more years at a highly successful school before transferring to one of Cambridgeshire's many good Secondary Schools – this is clearly preferable to transferring them at age 9 to a school which has recently had a catastrophic Ofsted inspection and been placed in Special Measures.”