

**Consultation on the Proposal to close the Sixth Form at
Smith's Wood Sports College**

Parent Consultation Paper

February 2017

Introduction

Due to continually falling numbers within the College's Sixth Form and a number of external pressures currently impacting upon the College the Governing Body has considered the viability of the Sixth Form at the school and is proposing that from 31st August 2018 the Sixth Form will be closed. If the proposal is agreed, following consultation, there will be no further intake into the Sixth Form in September 2017; current Year 12 pupils will continue into Year 13.

The Consultation Process

The Council in partnership with the Governing Body of Smith's Wood Sports College is seeking your views on the proposal to close the Sixth Form at the School from 31 August 2018. The consultation process will run from Monday 27th February 2017 until Friday 24th March 2017. All of the consultation information and an online response form can be found on the school website at <https://smithswood.co.uk> or the Council website at www.solihull.gov.uk/consultation.

A consultation meeting will be held at the school on **Thursday 2nd March at 5.00 pm** where you can come and find out more about the proposal and ask any questions you may have.

To make your views known you will need to complete a response form. This can be done online through the school or council websites. Paper copies of the response form are available from school or at the consultation event on 2nd March. All responses must be received by Noon on Friday 24th March 2017.

Context

The sixth form at the School opened in September 2009 and was expected to cater for 200 pupils. The initial Sixth Form proposal stated that the Smith's Wood Sixth Form offer would be made available to pupils in all schools in North Solihull. This has been the case but unfortunately marginal numbers of pupils have chosen the College Sixth Form over other providers.

Student Numbers

In its opening year there were 76 students on roll in the Sixth Form. There are currently 65 pupils on roll.

Table 1 below indicates the fluctuating student numbers within the Sixth Form;

Table 1: Student Numbers (December 2016)

Academic year	Year 12 - NOR	Year 13 - NOR	Year 14 - NOR	Total NOR
2009 - 10	76	-	-	76
2010 - 11	66	62	-	128
2011 - 12	39	6	-	45
2012 - 13	94	52	14	160
2013 - 14	82	54	5	141
2014 - 15	91	44	4	139
2015 - 16	39	49	-	88
2016 - 17	33	25	3	61

Numbers then declined significantly between 2014/15 and 2015/16. This trend has continued with projections for 2017/18 being approximately 60 students in total. Due to a number of factors the College has been unable to sustain sufficient pupil numbers in order to make the provision viable.

Curriculum design

Due to the realignment of the curriculum offer it remains that class sizes are incredibly small in the Sixth Form which further adds to the unviability of the provision. This is illustrated in **table 2** below;

Table 2: Student numbers by subject

Sixth Form Numbers 2016-2017	AS English Literature	AS Media	AS Psychology/ Sociology	AQA Certificate Level 3 (Core Maths)	BTEC Applied Science Sub Dip *	BTEC Applied Science Diploma	BTEC Public Services Sub Dip *	OCR ICT Sub Dip (or equivalent)*	OCR ICT Diploma (or equivalent)*	BTEC Business Sub Dip	BTEC Business Diploma	BTEC Travel & Tourism*	BTEC Health and Social Care Sub Dip	BTEC Health and Social Care Diploma	BTEC Sport Sub Dip	BTEC Sport Diploma*	GCSE Maths*	GCSE English	Level 2 First Certificate in Health & Social Care	Level 2 First Certificate in Public Services	TLM Level 3 Award in IT User Skills in Open Systems and Enterprise
Year 12	4	9	9	9	3		4	7	1	7		2	12	11	5	4	20	18	8	8	15
Year 13	7	5	1		7	4	1	13	5	5	3	1	8	6	7	4	5	1			

**Years 12 and 13 are taught together for these subjects due to student numbers and staffing availability*

Clearly with such small numbers in teaching groups timetabling these lessons is a strain on resources; it is simply not viable to have a teaching member of staff delivering to so few pupils. In order to overcome some of the potential barriers posed it has been necessary to timetable some Sixth Form pupils to be taught in mixed year groups; this is not ideal or acceptable at this level of study. Additionally, it does not make for a productive learning environment that is conducive to good progress for pupils.

Financial Context

Current financial modelling allows the conclusion to be drawn that from September 2017 the Sixth Form will begin to become financially unviable; in September 2017 the balance between staffing costs of the Sixth Form and estimated Sixth Form funding will be approximately £38,430 in deficit. This deficit will then be compounded year on year moving forward as funding levels decrease and staff costs increase.

Implications for students

Further Education choices in the locality

When the Sixth Form was opened the choices for further education locally were more limited than they are today. In Solihull students are fortunate that they are able to access courses and apprenticeship training at a wide range of venues. There are many schools, Sixth Form Colleges and other providers who offer a full range of 'A' levels, BTECs and other vocational qualifications, including the recently opened University Technical College (UTC). Current provision in the locality includes; Grace Academy, John Henry Newman Catholic College, Kingshurst CTC, Park Hall Academy, Coleshill School, Solihull Sixth Form College and Solihull College. At Solihull College apprenticeship programmes are offered at intermediate level 2, advanced level 3 and higher at level 4 and above. They are one of the leading employee training providers in the UK and West Midlands, with employer services currently working in businesses across Birmingham, Solihull, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Coventry and Warwickshire. Solihull College offers a wide range of programmes that are highly suited to our learners.

Current Year 12 pupils

Pupils currently in Year 12 will make the transition into Year 13 in September 2017. They will continue to receive quality education and support and guidance from College staff. Careers and higher education guidance will continue to be a priority for staff. Provision will not be compromised for these pupils.

Current Year 11 pupils

The College has estimated that approximately 30 Year 11 pupils may apply to attend the Sixth Form in September 2017. Due to reasons regarding timeframe the College has made parents aware that there is a possibility that Sixth Form provision may not be available in September and have suggested that students source an alternative placement that could be taken up in the event that there is no provision at Smith's Wood.

To support students and parents in achieving this, an event was held on February 15th 2017 to which prospective students were invited to meet with further education providers in the local area.

Additionally, one to one interviews and planning sessions are being offered by the College's Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAEG) Officer in order to draw on her wealth of knowledge and expertise in order to source alternative placements.

Where appropriate the College's Inclusion and Access team will provide support specifically for those pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Any parent or student wanting further advice about their options for September 2017 should contact, Mrs O'Donnell (Careers Advisor) at the school.

What will happen next?

Once the consultation process is complete, the views of parents/carers and the wider community will be considered before a final decision is taken on whether to close the Sixth Form at Smith's Wood Sports College. A final decision is likely to be made during the Summer Term 2017.

Further Information

If you need any further information you can contact:

Katy Craig, Principal Smith's Wood Sports College at the School; or

The School Place Planning Team at the Council on 0121 704 6702 or via email at researchandpolicy@solihull.gov.uk