

4 January 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian,

You will recall I wrote to you in October last year regarding the future of post-16 provision in Rutland. We have continued to engage in dialogue with the County Council but remain concerned about aspects of the proposals that are now being put forward for consultation.

As you are aware the college has been involved in discussions over a number of years around the future of post-16 in Rutland; an area of provision that has increasingly caused many of our parents concern. We believed that a close partnership between all three secondary colleges and the staff of Rutland College would lead to better provision for all young people in Rutland.

We were excluded from the most recent discussions which led to the County Council's current proposals to place post-16 learning under the control of Casterton Business and Enterprise College advised by a trust. It is stated by Rutland County Council that the trust will be 'the group of organisations responsible for the new college' (See <http://www.rutland.gov.uk/pp/pressrelease/pressdetail.asp?id=8461>); this will in fact not be the case. The trust can act only in an advisory capacity; the final decision on all post-16 matters in Rutland will rest with Casterton's governing body. The Rutland County College will exist in name only.

It is the view of Catmose College governors that all three 11-16 schools should be responsible for the governance of post-16 provision in order to ensure its success and viability. We are concerned that only one of the county's secondary schools will be involved in this crucial aspect of our children's education and do not know the reasons for this decision. We are advised that a number of other options could have been considered by the County Council including the creation of a genuine 'new college' or the conversion of all three 11-16 colleges into post-16 providers. We continue to believe that an independent post-16 college situated in Oakham, with its own principal but governed through the 11-16 colleges remains the best solution in the long term.

Alongside these reorganisation proposals it is anticipated by the County Council that the land of Rutland College will be sold by Tresham College who purchased it for £1 in 2001. We are uncertain of Tresham's intentions regarding the proceeds of this sale but have been led to believe that most of the money will leave the county. The Council is proposing to build a new post-16 learning centre but, with no identified site and with only around £4.8m, there will be limited choice for students once the existing buildings are demolished. The wider aspects of

good post-16 provision are likely to be lacking including adequate sports, drama or music facilities. We would anticipate that at least £10m would be required to fund the construction of a building catering for the predicted three hundred students; more if there is no suitable land available. We are concerned that Oakham will have significantly more housing as a result, but not the high quality educational facilities the students of Rutland deserve.

The anticipated decision by Tresham to withdraw from Rutland College within the next couple of years no doubt precipitated the County Council's decision to act so quickly on their proposals. This haste has led to proposals that we believe are not in the best interests of all Rutland students.

Catmose College and Uppingham Community College raised these concerns at the council meeting of 7 December. The Council voted to consult the public on these proposals at the beginning of January for four weeks. This is an important debate for Rutland and we would urge you to get involved whatever your view. There are two public meetings at 6.30pm on Wednesday 27 January at Oakham Museum and at 6.30pm on Thursday 4 February at Casterton Business & Enterprise College.

As a result of these concerns the governing body disagrees with the council's proposals to convert CBEC into a post-16 provider (Qu 2) and cannot agree to our involvement in the proposed trust which will have inadequate powers to manage this provision (Qu 3).

For our part, the Governors of Catmose College wish to be closely involved with the development of a broad high quality provision of post 16 education in Rutland. We will not be partners in any scheme, like the current proposal, which falls so far short of that aspiration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "SP Williams". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Stuart Williams

On behalf of the governing body