

RSck2009

4<sup>th</sup> January 2010

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We wrote to you in October about the development of Post-16 Education in Rutland and the proposals being pursued by Rutland County Council.

Since then, we have vigorously lobbied and campaigned for what we believe to be a significantly better and more attractive alternative solution for the students of Rutland.

It is the strong conviction of the UCC Governing Body that the future interests of Rutland students would be best served by the creation of a single Post-16 facility, including both 'A' levels and relevant vocational skills, centrally located. A leading edge learning environment supported by the highest calibre teaching and state of the art technology will be vital to its success. We believe that then, and only then, would sufficient numbers of parents and students choose to stay in Rutland for Post-16 learning in preference to other high achieving, 'out of county', schools and colleges. Oakham is clearly the ideal location in terms of accessibility and public transport links.

In our considered view, the current Rutland County Council proposals have been rushed through too quickly. These proposals not meet the needs of the majority of Rutland students and will not be financially viable. In fact, a substantial number of additional students would need to be attracted based on the current financial projections.

The Council's proposals amount to little more than an expedient solution which allows Tresham Institute to walk away from Rutland College and to gain financially from the sale of assets. It is also proposed that Casterton Business and Enterprise College will be established as the single 11-18 admissions authority for Rutland and will therefore be the only 11-18 college. CBEC's location on the very edge of the County and in close proximity to Stamford is inconvenient for many people and lacking the transport links of Oakham. New College, Stamford already provides a significant Post-16 offer in that area.

Our views and arguments have attracted strong support from a number of councillors, other prominent people in Rutland and are fully shared by Catmose College. Despite this, Rutland County Council voted to proceed to Statutory Public Consultation with their proposals unchanged. This consultation process will take place from January 4<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> February.

As parents and guardians you may have recently received a communication pack from the Council. A covering letter was included from Heather Wells, County Councillor and Portfolio Holder for Education. This letter appeared to infer that, as members of the Rutland Learning Partnership (RLP), Uppingham Community College supported the proposals. **We do not.**

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For all the reasons above, we regard them as inappropriate and inadequate. Our approach from the very beginning, within the RLP, has been to pursue the best outcome for all Rutland students via the creation of Post-16 learning facilities which, by 2013, would become the number one choice for both students and their parents. Crucially, from a financial perspective, there is a lack of capital currently available for this project and we believe that this further underlines the inadequacy of what is being proposed.

As Governors of UCC, it is also important that we protect our future as a high achieving 11-16 College, for our students, staff and long term viability. As well as not supporting Rutland County Council's Post-16 proposals, we believe that there are other risks, principally financial ones, which are against becoming a member of the proposed Educational Trust. Our understanding is that there are other types of Trusts that would be more appropriate. We will therefore continue to be an active voice within the RLP and to work towards a more equitable solution.

We wanted to take this opportunity to update you and to make our position clear at the start of the consultation process. We also feel that it is important to urge you to participate and to make your views known. These issues will affect every parent and child who lives in and/or is educated in Rutland and will shape the future of all Post-16 learning.

You may agree with us, or you may have different opinions. One thing is clear and that is nothing will change unless a large number of Rutland parents express their views. Please write to Carol Chambers, Director of Children's and Young People's Services at Rutland County Council and take part in the consultation. If you would like to send us your input we would welcome it and if you wish to discuss any aspects of this there will be a drop-in session in the community lounge at the College on 11<sup>th</sup> January between 6pm – 8pm where staff and governors would be happy to meet with you. There will also be a public meeting in January in Oakham.

On behalf of the Governing Body may we wish you a very happy and successful New Year.

Yours sincerely

Mr R. A. Sawyer  
Chair of Governors