

APPENDIX E2

Summary of responses by school

People allied to Park High School

Falling rolls

- Understand rolls are falling and surplus places are high
- Introduction of Birkenhead High School for Girls alongside Prenton has made the gender imbalance worse in mixed schools
- Just because there are rooms with chairs in doesn't mean there are surplus places
- Standards cannot be sustained when rolls are falling

Staff and Standards

- Standards are improving year on year at both schools
- Excellent ethos
- Pupils have a good rapport with staff
- Labelling both schools as National Challenge reinforces local snobbery against the schools
- A very good school
- Staff are very supportive and encouraging, give pupils best educational opportunities despite uncertainty
- My child went to the Sanderling Unit and the teachers helped him a lot
- Larger schools have worse GCSE results
- Concerns that class sizes would rise
- Concerns about loss of Sports specialism
- Concerns about the impact of amalgamation on GCSE results
- National Challenge is an arbitrary figure made up by Ed Balls
- National Challenge does not take into account socioeconomic background or grammar schools
- Last year 46% of pupils here passed English and 36% passed Maths
- Science has gone from 25% to over 80% C or above
- Park is not a failing school, it is unfair to staff to say so
- School educates some extremely challenging students to achieve the best possible grades
- Staff give up a lot of their time after school
- Standards will improve because of staff, parents and ethos, not buildings
- Inclusive school, takes anyone who wants to come
- Proud of Park

- Important that sporting links with the community are continued
- Concerns about compulsory redundancies

Pupils

- Children love coming to school here
- Concerns about disruption to childrens education
- I chose Park because of the Sports specialism, you are taking away my choice
- My school closed because of lack of numbers and it cocked up my education, you have to be very careful
- If the school moves, I will look for another school

Building and site

- Sports fields should not be sold or there will be no fit children
- What will happen to the community programme run from Park?
- When the other site closed there were 1100 pupils here and it felt crowded
- 700 to 800 pupils is a good number
- Have already had £10 million investment in the building
- Don't need material things to improve standards
- Prime location to serve the whole community
- Next to Birkenhead Park
- Good facilities thanks to PFI
- Schools are more than geographical physical sites

The Academy and Sponsors

- Could be a positive move for the children of both schools
- Not in favour of Academies, they're a political creation
- Sponsors will meddle with affairs of the classroom
- No connection between University of Chester and Park High School
- Only 50% of academies have been successful
- Forecasts for Ellesmere Port Academy are not evidence of success
- Concerned that Academy governing body will not represent local views
- Academy should keep elements of former schools best practice and good work including specialisms
- Can have confidence that the sponsor team will be successful
- Sponsors are enthusiastic and willing to make an even better school

The Proposal

- The Sanderling Unit should move to Park High School

- Pupil maps show that the Academy should be in central Birkenhead
- Ridgeway is too close to the edge of the area and too close to Woodchurch High
- Understand that the Academy will not be Park High
- Once in a lifetime opportunity for change
- Failure to act puts all schools at risk of a crisis in numbers
- Would the Academy be a large school?
- School would have a lot more pupils for three years which will mess up my child's education
- Will be massive redundancies in three years as the number on roll falls
- Proposal is a lifeline to Rock Ferry at the expense of Park

Alternative options

- Should close Rock Ferry High and leave Park open
- Neither school should be closed

The Process

- Children should come first not money
- This is about the community, must set aside the interests of individual schools
- We should have known about this when we were choosing secondary school options
- Consultation presentation told us nothing
- Should know what the Academy would be like before you close the schools
- Staff don't know what's going on, there has been three proposals so far
- Birkenhead High School for Girls should have closed, it was a failing business
- No point opposing the proposals because the consultation is a sham

Traffic and transport

- Rock Ferry pupils will not travel to Park, there are closer schools like Bebington, Prenton and Plessington

Financial

- This is all about selling the land at Rock Ferry High to make money
- If schools need money the government should give them money
- Better to get a substantial investment than no investment

Other Comments

- Heart of the community
- Generations have come to this school

People allied to Rock Ferry High School

Falling rolls

- New housing estates are being built which means more children
- You have already taken away The Dell Primary School
- Parents who would come here are put off by the closure consultation
- Pupils are haemorrhaging from Rock Ferry because they don't want to go to Park
- Understand the demographic issues and reasons why change is necessary
- Falling rolls mean schools have to close
- There is more competition for nursery places now
- Why is it acceptable for Birkenhead High School for Girls to have 100 pupils per year group and not for Park High and Rock Ferry High?
- Surplus space could be used for community purposes
- We lose a lot of kids to Bebington High School
- Numbers have fallen because Birkenhead schools do not have sixth forms
- If Rock Ferry was an Academy more kids would come here
- Comparing birth rates from 1950s to present day is unfair as contraceptives have been invented since that decade

Staff and Standards

- Good links with the community
- After school dance and drama classes are well attended
- Standards are improving
- CVA is good
- Teachers are passionate
- Small schools are better because they have small classes
- Sanderling Unit is very successful
- Excellent school
- Media have reported that Rock Ferry is failing, this is not the case
- Concerns about loss of staff expertise at Sanderling Unit
- Concerns about loss of Performing Arts College specialism
- Concern about continuity of GCSE courses for existing pupils
- No other schools do GCSE Dance and Performing Arts
- Both schools have good Ofsted reports
- Grammar schools cream off the best pupils which means results are not as good as other similarly disadvantaged schools in the country

- Small schools have smaller teaching groups
- Council letter to parents hinted that Park were not as failing as Rock Ferry, which has planted a seed of worry in the community
- How are you going to merge two staff rooms?
- Lovely school with caring atmosphere
- Staff are excellent and go out of their way to help children
- GCSE results are only low because of low pupil numbers

Building and site

- Only green space in the area
- Wonderful art deco architecture
- At 24 acres, a larger site than Park, more flexible
- Easy access to bus and rail routes at Rock Ferry
- Both schools are on sites with room for development
- New is not necessarily best
- You could build an Academy at Rock Ferry without any disruption to children
- Rock Ferry is surrounded by houses and shops so there is always help available if it is needed
- Park site is too small, very cramped and unfit for purpose
- Park site has been chosen for purely financial reasons, you owe money
- The Park site will undermine the sponsors vision
- Park High may have been refurbished but you can't tell from its decorative state
- Park site is satisfactory but it's location is not suitable for Rock Ferry parents
- Park's architecture is antiquated and cannot expand outwards, what if it needs to be expanded in 20 years time?
- Building Schools for the Future is about new build not refurbishment
- Will Sanderling Unit have it's own building?
- Building work at Park site will be disruptive for years
- Academy should have adult education and lifelong learning facilities
- A lot of outside groups use Rock Ferry High School, what will happen to them
- Rock Ferry site could accommodate community facilities, Sure Start, health care, mental health care, social services etc
- Park site does not allow for future expansion
- Rock Ferry has had a lot of money spent on it and could be refurbished further

- Ravenswood is an 1874 manor house, it will be stripped and demolished
- Park High has no playing fields on its own site

Pupils

- Pupils love coming to school
- Pupils would go to another school rather than the Academy and would miss out on the benefits
- Concerns about disruption to children in Key Stage 4
- Concerns about integration of Sanderling Unit pupils into mainstream classes and vulnerability of pupils
- Sanderling pupils are the most vulnerable and need great care planning their futures
- Change should not be at the expense of children's education
- More boys than girls in a class will disadvantage girl's education
- I chose this school because of the Performing Arts college status, you are taking away my choice
- If I had wanted Park High I would have sent my child there
- There would be more lateness and truancy if children had to travel further to school
- New build would raise children's self-esteem
- There's more overlap between Rock Ferry and Bebington than between Rock Ferry and Park High
- I moved school in my O level year and it was an absolute nightmare
- My child is settled here
- Children are well behaved coming out of school

The Academy and Sponsors

- Academy will be Park High with a new badge
- Academy will benefit the community
- Sponsorship team is tremendous, strong and impressive
- Happy with the University of Chester as lead sponsor
- Will breathe new life into the system
- Sponsors are suitable and have made a favourable impression
- The Academy will reach the ambitions and targets needed in education
- Links with HE and FE and Local Authority support are invaluable and will provide the best opportunities for pupils
- Staff at both schools are ready willing and able to play their parts
- There has been no consultation about the proposed specialism
- The Academy should have a sixth form

- The Academy should go from age 4 upwards

The Proposal

- Why deprive a deprived area of it's school and disadvantage it further
- This is just the closure of Rock Ferry by another name
- Changing the sign at Park High will make no difference, it is an in name only change
- Standards at the Academy will stay low if it is at Park
- Taking away parental choice
- Don't waste money on new build when established schools can be transformed into ultra modern sites
- Should stop intake and let the existing children and staff stay on site until all the children have finished, then transfer staff
- A school 5 miles away will not feel like our school
- This is a silly idea, there will be trouble
- Proposal is a missed opportunity for transformational change
- This is hastily and poorly thought out
- Should not have to settle for the second best cheap compromise option
- Rock Ferry would have no secondary school for boys
- Politicians lack ambition, this is short sighted
- It will be "them and us"
- Academies that have failed have been in existing premises
- Sponsors would prefer to work on a fresh canvas, this will hinder their academic vision
- Either Rock Ferry closes and has nothing, or it joins with Park High to form a new Academy
- Are parents who don't want to travel to Park guaranteed a place at a different local school?
- Got to think about the next 50 years
- There will be no mixed secondary school in the area
- Why mend what's not broken
- Refurbishment is cheating pupils by not accepting the governments full budget for a new school
- Small classes are more important than 21st century equipment
- Better to spend money investing in schools we have now than on an Academy
- Success of the academy is prejudiced by lack of ambition of politicians

Alternative options

- Make both schools smaller academies

- If the Academy was at Rock Ferry there would be no conflict as to whose school it is
- There is room at Rock Ferry to build an Academy
- Why can't it be built on a site closer to my house?
- This area deserves a state of the art new build as promised
- New purpose built "superschool" will provide vision, optimism and ambition
- Should find a neutral site equidistant between the two schools
- An extended search for appropriate venues is required
- All £30 million should be spent on a new school, not £10 million on a paint job
- Both schools should stay open as small schools
- Should stick to the original "three into two" plan
- Should move Prenton High to Rock Ferry and establish a Mixed Academy at Prenton High site
- Why can't it be built on the Shaftesbury site?
- You should ask Shaftesbury again now that David Hughes has withdrawn
- A small number of residents and a youth club should not compromise educational opportunities for generations to come
- Should move Acre Lane to the Park High site
- Shaftesbury site was never a deliverable option
- What other sites were looked at?
- Find the land, make it happen
- Take over the whole of the Priory commercial site which is near to transport hubs
- Wirral Council can find an alternative use for Park High School
- Only a new site would be fair
- Should improve both sites and keep Academy on both
- New build will not delay the Academy process as the two sites can stay in use until the new school is ready
- The head of the Ellesmere Port Academy said new build was vital to its success

Traffic and transport

- Pupils from Park High would not come here
- Concerns about distance to Park site
- Concerned about safety of children travelling home after dark

- Park Road North is dark and has trees, children could be attacked on the way home
- Most people in this area do not drive
- It is unfair to expect children to travel out of the area to Park High site or Bebington High
- Parents cannot afford travel costs
- Will there be free transport to the Academy?
- We chose Rock Ferry High because it is within walking distance
- No pupil is in walking distance of Park site
- This is against the Council's green policies as pupils will not be able to walk to school
- Park is on the other side of the Wirral
- Pupils and parents will not be able to attend after school activities unless they have their own transport
- Bussing children to Park site is possible
- Truancy will go up if children have to travel in the dark and rain
- Why is it difficult for the children from the north end of Birkenhead to travel south, but not difficult for the children from the south of Birkenhead to travel north
- Parents are worried about the cost of travel if free transport is not provided
- Over 60% of Rock Ferry pupils are on free school meals and parents would not be able to afford to travel

Financial

- Why is money being spent on Birkenhead High School for Girls? Wouldn't it be better spent here?
- This is all about making profit from selling Rock Ferry's land
- Will pupils have to have a new uniform?
- Investment in this area is long overdue
- Understand that schools are not financially viable with falling rolls
- Funding has already been allocated for Park High, but not for Rock Ferry, you have already made your decision

The Process

- You should put children and community first
- Parents should have been consulted earlier
- There were a lot more people at the Rock Ferry meeting than at the Park meeting and most of those were staff
- This is all about saving money
- This is not a child focussed decision

- Have other secondary school heads, staff and parents been consulted?
- Will everyone's views be made public?
- Have parents at the five local primary schools been consulted?
- How has the local community been consulted, as many people do not get free papers?
- A poster in the library does not constitute consultation
- Consultation should have been better and wider
- As a local resident I didn't know about the original proposal
- Why are consultation meetings not open to the public?
- You should not rush this through just for political expediency
- Needs more consultation with residents associations
- Council's letters to parents were biased towards Park
- You have already made your decision
- There are two girls schools at the cost of a mixed school closing

Other comments

- Generations have gone to this school
- Open for 80 years
- Rock Ferry has lost Byrne Avenue, what will be left if the school closes
- Both schools are old and well established
- Life expectancy is 10 years below other parts of Wirral
- Pupils are entitled to a local school

Other people

Falling rolls

- Pupils are transferring out of Rock Ferry because they don't want to go to Park
- New housing estates are being built which means more children
- How many children are on roll at both schools now?
- In London schools have closed, only to build new ones
- Why aren't smaller schools viable?
- Is the roll going to rise again?
- Would a lottery system help the falling roll situation?
- Understand the need to reduce schools because of the falling birth rate

Staff and Standards

- Sanderling Unit is very successful
- Rock Ferry has made progress over the years, confirmed by Ofsted
- Rock Ferry has its fair share of SEN pupils who are well served

- Need a good ratio of staff to pupils
- Small is beautiful
- Both schools are hugely successful, combining them will create a world class education
- What will happen to the Sanderling Unit?
- Learning and teaching is not just about exam results
- Qualifications guarantee nothing
- Concerns about loss of specialisms
- What would the class sizes be in the Academy?
- Concerns about breaking up good staff teams
- More boys than girls which has an effect on standards
- All schools have to raise their game to compete in the world economy

Building and site

- Park site is restricted with no room for expansion
- There is more potential at the Rock Ferry site
- Park High is spread across two sites
- Rock Ferry site can accommodate all the pupils from both schools in September 2010
- Both schools are underutilised, in industry you would close one site not both
- Are the main building at Rock Ferry and Ravenswood listed?
- What would happen to memorials and trees at the Rock Ferry site?
- Rock Ferry is a lung for the area with extensive grounds and playing fields
- Money spent refurbishing Rock Ferry would be wasted
- Who do Rock Ferry's land and buildings belong to?
- Are there any tree preservation orders?
- Both buildings are old
- Has the Council had any government advice about the condition and suitability of Park High as an Academy?

Pupils

- Sanderling unit pupils hate change and would not survive in a mainstream school setting
- Pupils would be anonymous in a large Academy

The Academy and Sponsors

- Academy is the way forward
- Support the sponsors

- Need to keep pace with educational advancement
- Academy should have dynamic leadership, be child focussed and inspirational and aspirational in ethos
- Children will benefit immensely from an academy
- Does the specialism mean our children are just being made ready for the service industry?
- The specialism assumes there is no culture in the area
- There is no business sponsor, isn't this essential for their financial contribution?
- How will sponsors pay for the new school if they have budget cuts?
- Suggest Birkenhead Institute Academy as the name

The Proposal

- Must look to the future
- Anything other than a new school is an insult to the children and tax payers of Wirral
- Short changing and fobbing off the children of Birkenhead by being educated in a less than adequate building just because of PFI
- What will happen to community facilities?
- Will the Academy merge with Birkenhead High School Academy as they are so close together?
- Most people seem to be in favour of the Academy by not the move away from Rock Ferry
- The combined roll is much higher than the 750 Academy number, what will happen to the additional pupils
- If Park High closes, does the land revert to park land?
- What happens when TUPE finishes?
- Will staff be paid below national rates, if so will only mediocre staff be attracted
- Different rates of pay for the same job is not conducive to good team working
- Concerns about damage done in running a school down in transition period
- Closing Rock Ferry High school is an act of pure vandalism
- We want good schools for boys in the area
- Must not make a decision that puts pressure on Ridgeway
- If Wirral Council has failed to provide schools that achieve the grades necessary, why are they a co-sponsor?
- Proposal will increase pressure on schools in Bebington

Alternative options

- Should be a new building not make do and mend
- Should find a neutral site equidistant between the two schools
- If there are no other sites, should build the Academy at Rock Ferry
- All £30 million should be spent on a new state of the art school
- School should be centrally located
- Should keep Rock Ferry open
- Could Park be closed if it's in a PFI contract to 2031?
- Park site could be used by Wirral Metropolitan College which has increasing student numbers given the recession

Traffic and transport

- Pupils would not travel miles to a new school
- Truancy would go up
- Carbon footprint would go up
- People want local schools where they live
- How will children get to Park site?
- Increased travel distance to Park, particularly dark in winter months
- Would the Council pay for buses and for how long?
- Lines of communication will be stretched
- Where do pupils live now?
- Concerns about distance to Park site
- More children will be NEET in future even if school buses are provided

Financial

- This is a finance led agenda
- Understand Council needs to make cuts but should look at the long term
- Rock Ferry High School is a prime piece of land for residential development
- Cost of new uniforms
- Has the Council considered the cost of redundancies and early retirements?
- Has the government withdrawn the £30 million for the new Academy?
- Are property developers involved?

The Process

- You should put children and community first
- Academy consultation meeting was not what I expected, only had 15 minutes to respond in small groups

- Why was Ridgeway dropped from the original proposal?
- Can the consultation be extended past 7th April?
- Can school governors prevent schools from closing?
- How would a change of government affect the proposals?
- You've already made a decision behind closed doors
- Consultation is a sham
- Disappointed by low turn out by primary parents at meetings

Other comments

- Generations have gone to this school
- Would regret seeing the school's name disappear
- People are proud of their school
- Rock Ferry will be the poorer if the school closes
- What will happen to the land at Rock Ferry, will our property be overlooked?
- This is an area of high social and financial deprivation
- Politicians should band together to prevent schools from closing
- Birkenhead Institute closed due to falling numbers despite it's rich local history