

The proposed closure of Collenswood and expansion of Barnwell Schools in Stevenage

We want to hear your views, January 2006

Design ref: DPPJ11414 CSF ref: 4302 December 2005



How you can let us have your views

You can let us know your views by:

- **Completing and returning the response form at the back of this booklet**
- **Completing the on-line form on our website at www.hertsdirect.org/csfconsultations**
- **Writing to us (freepost), if you do not want to use the form, to:**

CSF Planning
Freepost HJ71
Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 7YD

- **E-mailing us at sheila.wynn@hertscc.gov.uk**

However you choose to respond please let us know if you have other suggestions or options.

Your response needs to be with us by 31 January 2006.

During this period of consultation there will be meetings to discuss the proposals at:

12 January	Barnwell School	7-9pm
13 January	Barnwell School	7-9pm
16 January	Collenswood School	7-9pm
17 January	Collenswood School	7-9pm
19 January	Barnwell School	7-9pm
23 January	Collenswood School	7-9pm
24 January	Collenswood School	7-9pm

These meetings will be of a size that ensures everyone can express their views. If you wish to attend one of these meetings please **register a place by calling 01438 737350**. This line will be open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm, from 3 until 23 January. (Please note that this is a booking line only and staff will be unable to discuss any matters relating to the review). Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

This document is being widely distributed within the Stevenage area. If you would like more copies please ring us on 01992 556718.

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THE POSITION AT COLLENSWOOD SCHOOL

Collenswood School has experienced considerable difficulties in recent years. Following an inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in 2002 the School was judged to have serious weaknesses. In November 2003 the School was judged not to have made sufficient progress and was placed in special measures.

The current Headteacher was appointed just before the 2003 re-inspection and the School has received intensive educational and financial support during the last three years. When the School was first in special measures reasonable progress was made but in the last year, despite intensive support from the County Council and the hard work of the staff in the School, only limited progress has been made. The County Council is concerned that the School will be unable to make the necessary progress to provide an adequate standard of education for those pupils in the School and those joining next September.

In particular, there has been insufficient improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The observed quantity of good teaching in the School is about half the national average and has remained at this level for the last two years. The most obvious sign of this is that the results in the summer of 2005 were very low and showed a continuing downward trend. This is shown in the following table:

Year	% of 5 GCSE A* to C grades
2001	37
2002	35
2003	30
2004	33
2005	27

In addition, the school has a serious budgetary problem that is being made more difficult to manage because of falling pupil numbers and the very small numbers in the sixth form as the number of pupils generates most of the school's budget. These falling numbers are illustrated in the following table:

Year of entry	Pupils in year 7	Pupils in year 8	Pupils in year 9	Pupils in year 10	Pupils in year 11	Sixth form pupils	Total number of pupils
1999	163	160	164	159	158	81	885
2000	166	165	159	159	157	111	917
2001	164	165	160	159	159	99	906
2002	163	160	163	156	159	77	880
2003	158	159	150	157	154	56	834
2004	129	147	149	137	149	44	755
2005	90	129	147	149	137	25	677

This means that Collenswood is the smallest School in the Stevenage area by nearly 100 pupils. All the other Stevenage schools have stable numbers. For September 2006, only 44 parents have expressed a first preference for Collenswood and of these 29 are sibling connections.

County Council staff carried out a full review at the beginning of the autumn term 2005 led by a member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) which judged progress not to have been adequate overall, particularly in teaching and learning.

During November 2005 the School also had a review by Ofsted which concluded that it had not made sufficient progress. In the face of this evidence the County Council is required to intervene under the terms of the Learning Partnership agreement with all schools, and must consider the future of the School in the interests of those pupils who have already been in a School which has not been providing a satisfactory education for three years.

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WHAT IS THE COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSING?

The County Council is proposing that Collenswood School should close on 31 August 2006 at the end of the current 2005-06 academic year.

It does not take a decision to close any school lightly, recognising that schools play an important part in their local community. It has therefore considered an alternative to closure in the form of continuing support to the School in the hope that it will improve. However, after trying this for the last three years with only very limited success it was felt that it would not be feasible to continue to do this and would be unfair for pupils to have to spend any more time receiving a less than adequate education.

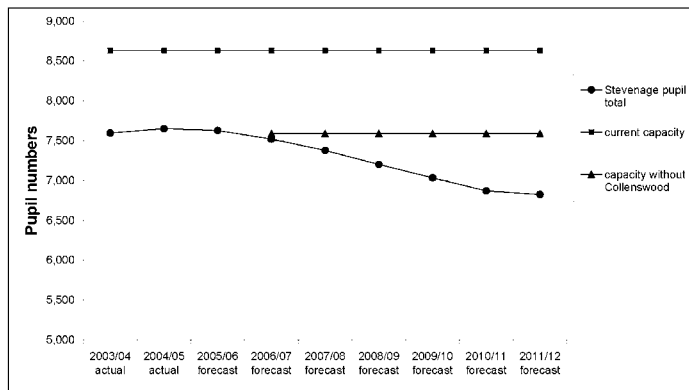
The County Council's linked proposal, therefore, is that Barnwell School should be expanded to take all the existing Collenswood pupils and those who will be allocated a place there for September 2006. Barnwell School would continue to use the Collenswood site and the Collenswood pupils would continue to use it, at least for the first few years, until some mixing is possible. These are both linked proposals at this stage; no decisions have been taken and will not be until the results of this consultation exercise have been considered.

WHY BARNWELL SCHOOL?

Barnwell School is a successful, oversubscribed school which has recently had a good Ofsted inspection. It is also near enough to Collenswood for the management of Barnwell School to be able to manage the Collenswood site as well as the Barnwell one. The headteacher and governing body of Barnwell School are very supportive of the County Council's proposal and would do all that they can to make it a success.

WOULD THERE BE ENOUGH SCHOOL PLACES IN STEVENAGE?

You may be concerned that, with the closure of Collenswood School, there would not be enough school places once Barnwell School ceases to use the Collenswood site and reverts to its current admission number. As the graph below shows, because of falling pupil numbers there would still be enough places available. The new housing which is planned to be built to the west of the ATM would have its own secondary school.



WHY WILL PUPILS BE ALLOCATED TO COLLENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR SEPTEMBER 2006?

Pupils will be allocated to Collenswood for September 2006 because the legal decision to close Collenswood School is unlikely to happen before April 2006 and the allocation of places in all secondary schools in Hertfordshire will have been made before then. If the decision to close the school is made, all the parents of Year 6 children who have been allocated a place there will be contacted individually. They would be offered a place at Barnwell School, which would have an increased admission number of 240, and be informed of the procedure for requesting a place at an alternative school should they so wish.

HOW WOULD THIS AFFECT THE EDUCATION OF PUPILS AT COLLENSWOOD?

It is our intention to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the education of pupils at Collenswood School. We are already working with the management and staff of both Collenswood and Barnwell Schools to ensure this. For example, all current GCSE programmes at Collenswood would continue and all sixth form students would be able to complete their A levels.

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL UNIFORMS?

Parents of existing Collenswood pupils who transfer to Barnwell or another school would receive a financial contribution towards a new school uniform. Barnwell School would bulk purchase school sweatshirts which would enable the County Council's financial support to go further. More information will be available should the decision to close Collenswood be taken.

WHAT ABOUT TRANSPORT?

If transferring to a new school or site results in a pupil having to travel more than three miles from home in each direction, the County Council would provide free transport. Any Collenswood pupil currently in receipt of free transport would continue to receive it while they remain on the Collenswood site. More information will be available should the decision to close Collenswood be taken.

WHAT WOULD THIS MEAN FOR THE COLLENSWOOD STAFF?

It is essential that Barnwell School has good teachers and support staff to ensure continuity of education for the Collenswood pupils should that school close. It is also important that the staff at Collenswood remain at the school until the end of the current academic year and receive the opportunity to continue with their careers. County Council personnel officers have already had meetings with the staff both as a group and individually.

WHAT ARE THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Should Collenswood School close, Barnwell School would become responsible for the delivery of the curriculum on the Collenswood site. As the largest source of funding for any school is the number of pupils it has, Barnwell would receive funding for the extra pupils it would have and for managing an extra site. The County Council would undertake some redecoration works on the Collenswood site in order to provide a corporate identity as part of Barnwell School.

HOW WILL THIS CONSULTATION WORK?

We will hold a series of meetings in Collenswood and Barnwell Schools which will be run by an independent facilitator. The meetings will be of a limited size so that the facilitator can ensure that all views are heard and considered at the meetings, and subsequently by the decision-makers. For the dates and times of these meetings please see page 1 of this booklet.

In addition there is a response form for your views at the end of this booklet and on our website. All responses will be reported and made available to the decision-makers.

HOW WILL THE DECISION BE TAKEN?

This consultation ends on 31 January. The County Council's Education Panel will first receive the results of the consultation process and will make a recommendation to Cabinet which meets on 21 February to take the decision on how to proceed. Both of these meetings are open to the public. If Cabinet decides that it wishes to go ahead with the proposals to close Collenswood and expand Barnwell it will publish statutory notices, one for each proposal, of its intention. These would run from 24 February to 24 March. Anybody is entitled to comment on, or object to, these notices.

If there are any objections to a notice, the decision on whether or not the proposal can go ahead would rest with the independent School Organisation Committee for Hertfordshire. This would meet around the middle of April and is open to the public.

Public Consultation RESPONSE FORM

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If you have comments about the proposals please complete this response form and return it (freepost) by 31 January 2006 to:

Sheila Wynn, CSF Planning, Freepost HJ71,
Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8YD



1 Name and address	
Name:	
Address:	
	Postcode:

2 About You	
SECTION A	SECTION B
I am:	I am mainly connected with:
Parent <input type="checkbox"/>	Barnwell <input type="checkbox"/>
Governor <input type="checkbox"/>	Collenswood <input type="checkbox"/>
Member of Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/> e.g resident or grandparent (please state below)	

3 The Proposal
1. The closure of Collenswood School
<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
2. The expansion of Barnwell School
<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

