

Appendix I – Summary of written consultation responses

The responses received have been summarised and grouped by category to show the most common reasons why any person was either for or against the proposal. Note that Crowland Parish Council has been very active in generating responses against the proposal. Those categories are shown below, along with comments relevant to each:

- The process is flawed / poor communication and lack of detail / decision already taken

The term 'flawed' has been used to reflect the issue regarding the delay in the sponsor publishing their own consultation document. The LA had stated that the two consultation processes would run alongside each other and that the sponsor had indicated that the Academy sponsors consultation would start by the beginning of March to overlap with the LA consultation which itself was originally set to end 16 March. The Academy consultation document was published on their website on 10 March. Although this still overlapped with the LA consultation the decision was taken to extend the LA consultation period by an additional week to 23 March to allow additional time to read the sponsors information. The statutory process has been followed throughout in accordance with the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and is not in any way flawed. Adequate time has been allowed for the consultation period and there has been an excellent response.

The LA is unable to publish detail on what the Academy may look like at this stage of the process and if detail had been provided then this would give support to the erroneous suggestion that the decision had already been taken. The proposal is clear and has been communicated to all interested parties in accordance with DfE guidance.

The decision on the future of The St Guthlac school will be taken at full Executive Council on 5 July 2011. No decision has been taken yet and there are many factors to consider before a full report can be put together with any recommendations at the end of the statutory and democratic processes required for making a key decision such as this.

- Damaging to the local community / economy (impact on local businesses / community cohesion / house prices)

These factors will have to be given serious consideration before a final decision could be made. At this stage of the process it is far too early to determine exactly what impact a potential secondary school closure may have and how that might be balanced out by the possibility of, for example, a more desirable local primary school which feeds into potentially improved and consequently more attractive secondary schools in the area.

- Issues with travel / length of school day / access to after school provision

The LA is legally required to provide transport for 11-16 year old pupils to their nearest appropriate school and it will continue to do so. The LA have a responsibility of ensuring that safe and accessible transport is provided to all pupils where appropriate, and this is no different. The LA has many years of experience in transporting thousands of children on a daily basis within a sparsely populated rural county.

It is hoped that enhanced after school provision will be offered should this proposal go through and other schools are committed to trying to put measures in place to ensure

that it is accessible by all. There is also the potential for extended and after school provision to be improved through the primary school potentially retaining the use of the St Guthlac site as an educational site and facility.

Comments have been received regarding travel time but surprisingly no-one has felt that travel time to a grammar school in the area is an issue.

- Bad for local children (education will suffer in a bigger school)

The LA works very hard with their school improvement partner (CfBT) to ensure that all children are provided with the best possible education. The LA, CfBT and the DfE believe that this proposal will offer a better education to children in the area and will lead to improving standards. Detail regarding the reasons why a small school is difficult to sustain educationally and the benefits a larger school brings are contained within the body of the report and the consultation document. There is also considerable evidence to support the counter-argument that a larger school is better able to meet the individual needs of its pupils.

- Would prefer to see a free school

The LA would not object to the proposal of a free school, but at this stage of the process we are not aware of any viable application being put forward to the DfE for a free school in Crowland or anywhere else in the area. The financial and educational models that have been looked at do not show secondary education in Crowland to be viable in a maintained school and so a free school would have similar financial challenges. A strong business case and a suitable site would need to be put forward to the DfE directly to support an application for a free school. This is out of the remit of the LA and does not affect the decision to proceed with this proposal.

- Promotion of The St Guthlac School has been inadequate allowing children from Crowland to go to other schools outside of the local community

It is the responsibility of the governing body of the school to effectively promote and market the school. The LA cannot be seen to promote one school above another. Within the secondary education system, which includes selective education and cross-border movement, there have historically been a large number of local parents choosing to take their children to alternative schools which in some cases offer benefits that a school the size of St Guthlac is simply not able to offer. Parental preference is key, especially within the context of falling rolls in the secondary sector, and as more than half of the local children do not attend The St Guthlac School parents are already expressing their preference for education in other parts of the county. The excellent work of the George Farmer school on educational performance at The St Guthlac school has not resulted in greater parental preference for the school.

- Through school model should be used to support primary and secondary education in Crowland

An independent review was carried out to look at this model, along with other options. All options, including a through school model, were not considered to be financially or educationally viable via this independent review and the LA agrees with this.

- Traffic and parking at Holbeach if expanded

If this proposal does go ahead then any plans for expansion would have to go for planning permission and traffic and parking would be a key consideration which would need the agreement of the planning authority.

- Concern over preference going to Crowland pupils over Holbeach pupils

The admissions policy must be consulted on and the wording out for consultation by the Academy sponsor at the moment states:

The Academy Trust will first accept all pupils with a statutory right to a place at the Academy through a statement of special educational needs naming the Academy.

If the new Academy were oversubscribed, priority would be given to students in the following order:

A. The child is in the care of the local authority.

B. There is a brother or sister at the school who will still be attending when the child is due to start.

C. A child living within the combined area of the parishes of (in no order of priority) Holbeach, Fleet, Whaplode, and Crowland

D. The driving distance from the home to the school, as measured by the Local Authority school admissions team, with the child living nearer the school having priority. This will be the tie-breaker if necessary

The Academy is committed to ensuring that the ongoing needs of both communities served by St Guthlac School and George Farmer Technology and Language College are represented when reviewing the Academy's admissions policy annually. We will be seeking views on this as part of this consultation and in the future.

- Good for children – better facilities, wider curriculum, improved standards

The LA agrees with this stance and that is why the proposal has been put forward.

Overall, it is important to note that of the responses supporting the proposal 73% came from parents or carers which contrasts markedly with the responses against the proposal of which 51% came from parents or carers.

From all of the written responses received (whether for, against or neither) where a clear reason for the response was given, 19% thought the proposal was good for the children. 11% thought it was bad for the children.

Of those for the proposal 38% mentioned that it was in the best interests of the children. Of those against the proposal only 19% mentioned that it was not in the best interests of the children.

The table below shows the number of responses broken down by opinion and their representation:

Point of View	For Proposal (165)		Not For or Against (78)		Against Proposal (196)		Total (439)
Council (Parish/District/Non-Lincs)	1	20%	0%		4	80%	5 1%
County Councillor	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
District Coucillor	0%		0%		2	100%	2 0%
Employer/Business	0%		0%		4	100%	4 1%
Former Parent	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Former Pupil	0%		0%		5	100%	5 1%
Former Resident	0%		0%		2	100%	2 0%
Friend	0%		0%		3	100%	3 1%
Future Pupil	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Governor	1	50%	0%		1	50%	2 0%
Grandparent	0%		0%		8	100%	8 2%
Have family in town	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Local Resident	0%		0%		17	100%	17 4%
Other	4	80%	0%		1	20%	5 1%
Parent/Carer	120	42%	65	23%	100	35%	285 65%
Parent/Carer also Teacher/Support Staff	1	100%	0%		0%		1 0%
Parish Councillor	0%		0%		6	100%	6 1%
Playgroup	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Police	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Practice Nurse	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Preschool Manager	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Pupil	4	15%	4	15%	19	70%	27 6%
Retired	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Retired Teacher	0%		0%		1	100%	1 0%
Student	0%		3	100%	0%		3 1%
Student 6th form	0%		2	100%	0%		2 0%
Teacher/School Staff	34	77%	4	9%	6	14%	44 10%
Not Specified	0%		0%		8	100%	8 2%
Grand Total	165	38%	78	18%	196	45%	439

For those responses where a clear reason(s) was given for why there were for/against/neither then they were categorised where possible:

Point of View	Flawed proposal, poor communication, decision already taken		Damages local Community/Economy		Issues with travel and/or length of school day/access to after school provision		Bad for local children, education will suffer, new school too big.		In favour of free school		Promotion of St Guthlac/Allowing children to go to other schools		Through School		Good for children - better Facilities, wider curriculum, improved standards		Total number of specific reasons given
Council	1	20%	3	60%	1	20%											5
County Councillor	1	100%															1
District Councillor	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%					2	33%	1	17%			6
Employer/Business	3	33%	3	33%	3	33%											9
Former Parent	1	33%			1	33%	1	33%									3
Former Pupil			2	50%	2	50%											4
Former Resident			2	100%													2
Friend			2	100%													2
Future Pupil									1	100%							1
Governor	1	25%			1	25%	1	25%			1	25%					4
Grandparent			3	30%	3	30%	3	30%	1	10%							10
Have family in town			1	50%	1	50%											2
Local Resident	3	12%	12	48%	5	20%	1	4%	1	4%	3	12%					25
Not Specified			3	30%	2	20%	3	30%			2	20%					10
Other	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%							2	33%	6
Parent/Carer	11	6%	31	18%	52	30%	24	14%	5	3%	7	4%	2	1%	40	23%	172
Parent/Carer also Teacher/Support Staff																	0
Parish Councillor	2	17%	5	42%	3	25%							2	17%			12
Playgroup			1	100%													1
Police			1	100%													1
Practice Nurse					1	50%	1	50%									2
Preschool Manager			1	100%													1
Pupil			3	18%	8	47%	2	12%	2	12%					2	12%	17
Retired	1	50%	1	50%													2
Retired Teacher																	0
Student																	0
Student 6th form																	0
Teacher/School Staff	2	7%	4	13%	4	13%							1	3%	19	63%	30
Grand Total	28	9%	80	24%	89	27%	37	11%	10	3%	15	5%	6	2%	63	19%	328

Summary of some of the key comments made (some responses received did not give a comment):

GF wants SG to gain Academy status but does not want the children.
Closing educational centre is disaster for local (community)
Local school for local children
Bigger class sizes. Crowland children will be given places above the Holbeach children.
Moved to village because all education in vicinity
Questions whether travel will be free. School is improving. Uncertainty affecting numbers.
Deficit will be lower than reported. Improving school. Some pupils need small school
Win win for Holbeach, lose lose for Crowland. SG improving. Academy sponsors document not clear on 2012 intake. Insufficient consideration of options. SG offers balanced curriculum. Announcement led to drop in applications. Academy will be over subscribed, SG pupils will lose. Consider other federations
GF large school - less individual attention
Did not choose to send son to GF. Do not drive. Decision to close SG already taken. GF running SG down.
Not enough car parking. Additional traffic not safe for children.
Leadership behind proposal. Good links with primaries.
£8.25m investment in the South of the county cannot be lost
Valued part of the community. Caters for special needs
Children can walk to school.
Moved here because local schools. Low numbers due to uncertainty.
HGFTLC successful school with outstanding head teacher
Facilities there for the whole of Crowland

Positive proposal
Bigger is not always better.
Daughter attending St Guthlacs from Sept 11. Concerned receiving school may be other than George Farmer when starting options
Concern regarding parking
Education will suffer as school will be massive. Integration of the two schools will be difficult.
Insufficient information to make a decision
Prefers class sizes not to increase
Lack of information
Some advantages visible in the short term
Strengthened links with University etc, English Baccalaureate. Concerned about class sizes and support for all abilities.
Will school uniform be provided and free? Can parents go to GF to see school? Is Market Deeping in Crowland catchment now? Are all SG pupils guaranteed a place at GF? Other reasons for decision, not just pupil numbers.
Reduces choice
It's hard enough for local families to get in now, allowing families from Crowland will just take up places.
Blames LCC for allowing children to go to other schools
Concerned that GF site will become a building site
This school (GF) is very liked in the area and it's nice to have it recognised.
Money should be given to run down schools not GF. SG not run down, has good facilities.
Time scale bad - reflects on current HT's management skills. Land behind SG can only be used for school so use this for Primary. Academy just a quick fix - will not work in long term.
Only good for GF. Small schools good.

More 6th form choices and higher education opportunities
Don't want pitches building on. Need to maintain funding of other schools to maintain choice.
Need for clear and cohesive plan for education across the District. Uncertainty has led to deficit
Smaller school caters for son's needs
Better facilities but will pupils get enough attention. Traffic may be a problem.
A positive move towards a better education
Daughter doing very well at SG
Fantastic education at GF - much praise to HT and staff
One of the most positive things to happen in a long time
Not enough schools as it is. S Lincs is expanding.
SG takes a lot of excluded pupils and turns them round.
It (SG) has helped me to achieve the grades I was predicted.
Moved to Crowland because of school
Young people will no longer identify with the town.
Small caring secondary school.
Families would no longer consider moving here. GF will be too big.
A disaster waiting to happen
Crowland has no affinity with Holbeach.
Would like to see "George Farmer" retained in the school name as locality and tradition important to the area. Would like to see suitable plans/funds made available for PE

Better future for next generation
Long distance not environmental. Children encouraged to walk to school.
Greater financial benefits for the Academy
Strong leadership with very positive ideas at GF
Waste of money. More expense on uniform.
GF is a really good school and with SG both can go from strength to strength. What about name and uniform?
SG small school - as an Academy, children will just be a number.
Not against Academy but against closure of SG
SG is an improving school. Drop in numbers expected due to uncertainty.
High standards would be in jeopardy from the diversity and possibly the negative attributes that the relating schools would bring.
Merger will make school and classes too large and children will be overlooked
Insufficient knowledge of academies, concerned may be detrimental to what is a very good school, pupil integration may be challenging
There wouldn't be a secondary in Crowland. Crowland students will feel out of place.
Best interests of pupils most important factor not just saving money
Change to the Academy would be good for the school in Holbeach
Education will suffer if school's roll becomes too big. Let's look after our own. I question the HT's loyalty.
Insufficient knowledge of academies, wants to be convinced this is the best thing for the school any myself
Number of schools closer to Crowland that should take pupils.
A local school is essential for the bonding of a community.

The Academy will provide a less restrictive approach to education

Finances matter more than children and communities. Only winner is GF. Academies are huge holding houses for children. Enlarged primary will threaten small local primaries.

Speculation has reduced numbers. Promote in Spalding where co-ed nature offers alternative to single sex schools. Make it a through school by moving Primary onto shared site.

Not against two site Academy

Good HT and staff

Will be good for Holbeach and the surrounding area

Cannot see it being good for Lincolnshire to have control of the school where the head is insistent he is in charge and the governors will always back him as he is the head.

Improved links with university

Concern regarding possible disruption to education during transition when building works being carried out

Benefits outweigh disadvantages

Good boost for local community and economy

Why close a good school and add pupils to an already stretched school?

Insufficient information to make a decision. What are the long term plans? Will site be able to accommodate growing school?

SG under funded in past. Good system and school.

SG used as dumping ground for unwanted pupils. Holbeach HT not interested - run SG into ground. Academy should be run from both sites.

Would support two site Academy.

Good and improving school. Teachers will lose jobs.

SG has unrivalled pastoral care. Don't want to lose facilities.

Does not understand closure of GF to open Academy. Does not know how long it will take and believes it should be done during holidays.

Unity would make a stronger school
Concern regarding parking and availability of 6th form places
There wouldn't be a secondary in Crowland. Crowland students will feel out of place.
SG benefits parents who have children at Primary
Great opportunity for both schools
School could benefit highly from Academy Status
GF Governors committed to helping Crowland children towards a better education
Wonderful opportunity for local children
Merging two schools 15 miles apart is ridiculous.
Guthlacs has great staff who teach good. Some will lose their job. Also, I don't like GF much.
Small = benefit. Proposal only beneficial to GF - gets them new facilities. No mixed sex schooling in Spalding.
In favour of Academy but shame that SG is closing.
During building project suggest that eg Yr 7 or 8 have core lesson at Crowland and returned via transport
Enables greater/broader knowledge within teaching staff
Should concentrate on the school we have now and not try to make it bigger.
Distance would impact on social life as well as education.
SG is too small to function alone. GFTLC has all the benefits of an Academy already.
Small local school. Impending closure will affect teaching standards.
Good for the children and the community

Only logical solution to various problems
Progression always a good thing. Enables new experiences and combines teaching of both schools
Sports facilities will benefit both pupils and the local community
Like SG because local and small. Also like the thought of more facilities and options.
The quality of education is the paramount issue
Will benefit present and future generations of pupils who attend the Academy
Village is growing. Teachers will lose jobs. If need bigger primary, makes sense to keep secondary.
Short sighted. Uncertainty has put off parents.
Consultation is a shameful tick box exercise.
Proposal sensible, concerned about SEN, need more information especially about closure of SG site. Open evening at GF for SG parents would be good idea.
Would like assurance that pay scale/scheme will stay in line with current government guidelines (if not exceeding) in the long term.
Big schools lose sense of values. HT commitment to SG site and pupils. Does GF take money from SG budget?
No commitment to SG. Crowland children will be alienated. Plan to let SG fail. Central Govt emphasis moving away from vocational courses - will suit SG. A-C ranking not a level playing field.
Will benefit thousands of children for many years to come.
Impressed by leadership and management of GF. Merger would give SG pupils same opportunity.
Good for the future of pupils and overall for Holbeach town
GF has improved radically over the years
More investment in education. Benefits should outweigh travel.
Disruptive to GCSE. One sided bargain to prop up failing SG. Empire building by HT.

One sided deal. St Guthlacs has everything to gain while GF will just get messed around by the upheaval.

School will have more financial control. For SG, benefits of joining GF outweigh additional journey time.

We seem forgotten by Councils who prefer Holbeach and Spalding areas.

Through education attracts residents. Like smaller school.

LA should offer to bus all children to Deeping as soon as Academy is open. Need to preserve local facilities.

Falling role at SG unsustainable, more space required at GF. Wider curriculum. GF OfSTED - Good with Outstanding features

Provision needs to be made to ensure that Crowland pupils get the places they deserve