

By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director for Children, Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 September 2010

Subject: PROPOSED NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THE GOAT LEES ESTATE, ASHFORD – OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A consultation was undertaken to seek the public's views on the proposals received from Ashford Baptist Church and Ashford Primary Headteachers Collaboration to promote the new Goat Lees Primary School.

SOAB Members are asked to advise the Cabinet Member.

Introduction

1. (1) In November and December 2009, the Local Authority (LA) consulted on the need for a new maintained primary school to meet the demand for places arising from the new housing development at Goat Lees, Ashford. The outcome (reported to SOAB on 7 January 2010) was that the community were fully supportive of a new primary school which met the following specification:

- 210 places for boys and girls
- Age range 4 to 11 years
- Published Admission Number of 30
- Located in the Goat Lees estate
- Primarily to serve the Goat Lees community and neighbouring developments
- To be accessible to disabled pupils
- Offer extended school services
- To open on 1 September 2012

(2) Following on from this and in accordance with Legislation the LA issued a competition notice (see Appendix 1) in February 2010 inviting potential promoters to submit proposals for the new school. The competition period ran for four months and ended on 14 June 2010. Promoters were encouraged to submit proposals which complied with the LA specification for the new school as set out above.

(3) This paper reports back on the outcome of the consultation in which the public's views were sought on the proposals received.

Details of Proposals Received

2. (1) During the competition period two proposals were received from (1) Ashford Baptist Church and (2) Ashford Primary Headteachers' Collaboration. Copies of the proposals are attached as Appendix 2.

(2) Ashford Baptist Church is proposing to establish a new Trust school which would be supported by the Ashford Baptist Church Education Trust. The promoters have confirmed that they would deliver a school which conforms to the LA specification and their submission supports this assurance. It should be highlighted that the Ashford Baptist Church Education Trust has not yet been formed.

(3) Ashford Primary Headteachers Collaboration is proposing to establish a new foundation school. The promoters have confirmed that they would deliver a school which conforms to the LA specification and their submission supports this assurance.

Consultation Process

3. (1) Legislation requires the LA to seek the views of the public regarding proposals received during the competition period. The LA started a consultation on 2 July, in which a statutory notice (see Appendix 3) was issued and a consultation document was distributed (copy attached as Appendix 4). The representation period ended on 12 August 2010.

(2) The consultation document was produced in collaboration with the DFE's appointed consultants from the Office for Public Management. Approximately 250 copies of the document were distributed. Consultees included: Cabinet Members, SOAB Members, Local Members, Local Member of Parliament, Parish Councils, Ashford Borough Council (including the Local Ward Councillor), primary and secondary schools in Ashford, Kent Governors' Association, Diocesan Boards, all Early Years settings in the vicinity, key colleagues within the Children, Families and Education Directorate, Ashford's Future Board, Primary Care Trust, Children's Centres in Ashford.

(3) Flyers advertising the public meeting were distributed to the properties on the Goat Lees estate.

(4) In addition, a public meeting was held at Goat Lees Community Hall, Trinity Road, Ashford on 20 July 2010 to raise public awareness of the proposal and to seek comments. Mrs Valerie Dagger chaired the meeting. In attendance were David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer and other KCC Officers. Mrs Elizabeth Tweed, KCC Member for Ashford Central also attended.

(5) Approximately 60 members of the public attended the meeting.

Response to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) The statutory representation period ended on 12 August 2010. 11 responses have been received, of which 3 are in favour of the Ashford Baptist Church proposal, 7 are in favour of the proposal by the Ashford Primary Headteachers Collaboration and 1 is undecided.

(2) A detailed analysis of written responses is attached as Appendix 5.

Public Meeting Responses

(3) A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting is attached as Appendix 6.

Views of Local Members

5. (1) Mrs Elizabeth Tweed feels that both proposers have a lot to offer and that either proposer would do a good job. Ashford Baptist Church is in tune with environmental concerns and is offering lots of after school activities. The Collaboration of local schools has lots of experience. Phoenix Primary School in particular understands what it is like to have a school built around them.

(2) Mr Richard King is inclined to support the Headteachers proposal.

(3) Mr Andrew Wickham feels that having read the proposals by the two bidders, he would come down on the side of the application by the Ashford Baptist Church mainly because he preferred the ethos as described in the application and feels that the residents of Goat Lees would benefit from such an ethos. Having said this, he was sure that the Ashford Primary Headteachers' Collaboration would similarly provide a good service. If he had to come down on one side it would be the Baptist Church.

Views of Local Member of Parliament

6. Mr Damian Green has not commented on either proposal received by gave the following comment for the SOAB on 7 January 2010: "I have spoken to many of the local residents and representatives involved in this, and I support the development of this new school. My preference would be for it to open for all years at once, as the alternative could leave some parents frustrated by an inability to put their children into the nearest school for a number of years after its opening."

Views of Ashford Borough Council

7. No comments have been received.

Views of the Parish Council

8. No comments have been received.

Views of the Diocesan Authorities

9. No comments have been received.

Views of Highways (if appropriate)

10. (1) Cycle storage and staff parking should be in accordance with Kent Parking Standards. Given the history of parking problems on the estate the parking spaces should meet maximum standards.

(2) A Travel Plan will need to be developed as part of the planning application. It will include measurements such as how the school will encourage both pupils and staff to travel to the site sustainably. Although the school cannot establish likely modal shares, a generic travel plan can be submitted. A full travel survey of pupils and staff can be undertaken upon occupation of the site and further targets can then be set.

(3) Thought should be given as to whether a drop-off area within the school site is acceptable so as to ensure that the parking problems on the estate are not made worse by this application.

Views of the Area Children's Services Officer

11. (1) The community have agreed that there is a need for a new school in the area and want the school to be primarily for local children as well as serving as a hub for the community. Their consensus is that the school initially open with 4 classrooms and add 3 further classes as demand for places increases. Both proposals meet these fundamental requirements.

(2) It is welcomed that we received two bids to promote the school. The commitment of all those involved in these bids has been tremendous and should be congratulated. Both bids are strong and have merit. It is regrettable that only one can be selected and thus one set of promoters will be disappointed.

(3) The key differences in the bids can best be summarised as follows. The Headteachers Collaboration have proven experience of running successful schools, and include in their ranks a National Leader in Education. The Collaboration see their role as two phased; first establishing the school with the involvement of the community; then handing the school to the community with ongoing support as part of a family of schools. The Ashford Baptist Church has less first hand experience of running schools within its group of promoters, but has significant experience of community engagement and education in the broader context. The Church proposes a long term relationship with the school, with it being a Trust School with the Trust appointing the majority of governors.

(4) I believe that both promoters would deliver a school in the community and would be committed to ensuring this offers high quality education. The bids have been considered using the selection criteria at Appendix 7. I feel the Headteachers Collaboration is stronger in terms of being able to substantiate claims in relation to delivery of high quality education. Both providers would offer a wide range of extended school services, and thus there is little to choose between them on this point. The Ashford Baptist Church bid appears stronger in relation to the school being the heart of the wider community.

(5) On balance, with the primary purpose of the school being to deliver high quality education, I would recommend the Ashford Headteachers' Collaboration bid be accepted.

(6) SOAB Members are asked to comment on the proposals before making a recommendation to the Cabinet Member.

Transport and Environmental Impact Including Community Implications

12. (1) The creation of a school should reduce the risk of the LA needing to transport primary aged pupils to access education. Government requirements emphasise the need for new schools to be built with a zero-carbon foot-print.

(2) This school is intended primarily for residents on the Goat Lees estate. The estate has cycle-ways and footpaths and it is envisioned that the majority of pupils will walk or cycle to school.

Resource Issues

Capital

13. (1) The site of this development is available via developer contributions. The anticipated cost for a 1fe school is some of 4m+. Approximately 20% of the cost is available from developer contributions with the rest having to r found from a future CFE Capital Programme.

Revenue

(2) The school will be funded via the Dedicated Schools Grant according to KCC's funding formula. The LA's allocation from Central Government is increased according to rising pupil numbers.

(3) KCC's current policy is to provide reorganisation fund money to new schools. The current allocation is £47,100 lump sum plus £6,728 per class. An existing budget exists to meet this cost. The exact allocation made available to this new school would be derived according to the policy and rates that apply in the year of opening.

Equality Issues

14. (1) The school will be fully accessible, thereby increasing the range of provision available to pupils with a physical disability.

School Improvement Implications

15. (1) Whilst it is recognised that some children will be moved from neighbouring schools to attend this school when it opens in September 2012, the numbers involved are not likely to be high and as the successful promoter will work closely with other primary schools in the area, the effect on those other schools will not be detrimental.

(2) Both proposals show a clear desire to provide a high quality community school to fully meet the needs of not just the local children but the local residents as well.

Proposed Timetable

16. If SOAB Members are of the opinion that one of the proposals be considered for approval by the Cabinet Member, then the following decision making timetable should apply:

Cabinet Member Decision	September 2010
Scrutiny Committee (if required)	September 2010
Final date by which the LA must make a decision on the proposal	13 October 2010
Implementation date	1 September 2012

Recommendation

17. The School Organisation Advisory is asked to advise the Cabinet Member which bid to approve.

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The Local Members are Elizabeth Tweed, Richard King and Andrew Wickham

Background Documents:

School Organisation Advisory Board - 7 January 2010