

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 December 2008

Subject: REPTON PARK (also known as Templar Barracks), ASHFORD.
PROPOSED NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION - OUTCOME
OF CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A consultation was undertaken to seek the public's views on
The Homewood Trust proposal to promote the new Repton Park
Primary School.

SOAB Members' views are sought on whether the 'The
Homewood Trust' proposal should be approved.

Introduction

1. (1) In January 2008, 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 expected in Repton Park, Templar Way, Ashford. The outcome (reported to SOAB on 19 March 2008) 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 Admissions Number of 30
- Provision (in partnership or directly) of full day care pre-school places
- Located in Repton Park
- To serve Repton Park and neighbouring housing developments provision
- To be accessible to disabled pupils
- The central infrastructure to be sufficient for a 2FE school
- Offer extended school services
- To open 1 September 2010

(2) Following on from this, and in accordance with Legislation, the LA issued a competition notice (see Appendix 1) in April 2008 inviting potential promoters to submit proposals for the new school. The competition period ran for four months and ended on 9 September 2008. 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 proposal received.

Details of Proposals Received

2. (1) During the competition period one proposal was received from 'The Homewood Trust', its members being Mr W Cotterell, Principal of Homewood School, Mrs J Kirk and Mr M Frey (Chair and Vice-Chair of Homewood School). A copy of the proposal is attached as Appendix 2.

(2) 'The Homewood Trust' is proposing to establish a new foundation school which would be supported by the Homewood School 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 Homewood Trust' has not yet been formed. However, it is our understanding that Homewood School is currently pursuing Trust status and the formation of the Trust is imminent.

Consultation Process

3. (1) Legislation requires the LA has to seek the views of the public regarding proposals received during the competition period. The LA started a consultation on 26 September, 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 7 November 2008.

(2) The consultation document was produced in collaboration with the DCSF appointed consultants from the Office for Public Management. Approximately 1,000 copies of the document were circulated. It was widely 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 the Ashford Partnerships, Kent Governors Association, Diocesan Boards, all early years settings in Ashford, key colleagues within the Children, Families and Education Directorate, Ashford's Future Board, houses and marketing suites on the Repton Park development, Primary Care Trust, Willows Children's Centre and the Ray Allen Children's Centre.

(3) In addition, a public meeting was held at St Teresa's Primary School on 1 October 2008 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. The Local Member, Mrs Elizabeth Tweed attended. DCSF appointed consultants from the Office for Public Management were also in attendance.

(4) Approximately 12 members of the public attended.

Response to the Public Consultation

Written responses

4. (1) The statutory representation period ended on 7 November 2008. As at 22 October 2008, 5 responses have been received, of which 2 are in favour, and the remainder raise questions of concern.

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

Public meeting responses

(3) Summaries of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting are attached at Appendix 6.

Views of the Local Member

5. Mrs Elizabeth Tweed supports the proposal. A school is needed early in the development cycle of this estate to ensure there is a focal point for community development and to create a sense of place. The estate will sustain its own school and children should be able to access provision within walking distance.

Views of the Ashford Partnership Boards

6. *Ashford Rural*

(1) The school will be located in the Ashford Rural Partnership area. The Partnership Board fully endorse the proposal. They see the benefits of the Homewood Trust Bid in terms of curriculum innovation and community development. Homewood School has a proven record of strong extended services and outward-looking approach to education. The Board felt that the proposal would ensure community cohesion and high educational expectations and standards.

Ashford 1

(2) The Partnership has raised concerns that Homewood School is 12 miles from Repton Park and the proposal risks extracting this primary school from potential Partnerships with Ashford One schools. This might undermine Local Children's Trust development.

Views of the Local Member of Parliament

7. (1) Comments have yet to be received from Mr Damian Green, MP for Ashford

Views of Ashford Borough Council

8. (1) Have not yet been received.

Views of Parish Council

9. (1) Great Chart, Hothfield, Kingsnorth, Stanhope and Westwell Parish Councils are aware of the proposal. Responses have not yet been received from any of the Parish Councils.

Views of the Area's Children's Services Officer

10. (1) The proposal conforms to the specification published by the Local Authority. The promoters can evidence a strong record of educational achievement at Homewood School where they are governors. Homewood School is also recognised for its extended school provision and community access. Fundamental to the vision of the LA is a school which helps create a community in Repton Park, one which is open to the public and responsive to the needs of the local residents (of all ages). The promoters have indicated a willingness to include residents into The Homewood Trust to ensure they have a real stake in their local school. The promoters, through Homewood School have demonstrated a strong commitment to working with a family of schools, both via their Partnership and through the School's leading edge status. I support the proposal.

(2) SOAB Members' are to comment on the proposal and to consider whether it fully meets the LA specification for the new school, before making a recommendation to the Cabinet Member. To assist SOAB and the Cabinet Member in the decision making process selection criteria has been developed. Although the criteria was originally intended for the selection process if more than one proposal was received, Members may consider it a useful resource for determining the outcome of the proposal. The criteria are attached in Appendix 7.

(3) Due to the economic situation and slow-down in house building, the developers have temporarily suspended building works on the north side of the Repton Park development, which is where the school site is situated. Current indications from the developers are that completions would resume in 2010, but at a lesser rate than will be the case in 2012. This will delay the land transfer to KCC and the provision of access roads.

(4) As a consequence of this, Members' views are sought on modifying the proposal to have an implementation date of September 2012, with the decision maker (the Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources & Skills), being able to agree a further delay in implementation at the request of the promoter if circumstances require.

(5) The promoter has been consulted and would support this modification.

Transport and Environmental Impact Including Community Implications

11. (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) The creation of a school early in the development of the Repton Park site will have a positive impact on generating a sustainable community in this locality. It will enable the community to gel, and create a heart which is essential for community well being. This fits with the LA's vision of schools at the heart of their community.

Resource Implications

Capital

12. (1) The site and the capital costs of this development are available via developer contributions. The anticipated costs for a 1FE hybrid school with nursery are £3m. The remaining developer contributions may be used at a later date to enable expansion to 2FE subject to demand.

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.

(4) The nursery will be funded in accordance with the County Council's Early Years funding mechanism.

Equality Issues

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

School Improvement Implications

14. (1) The ambition to create a new school early in the building of the development aims to avoid the negative impact on neighbouring schools of children being admitted due to a lack of on-site provision, only to leave when the new school opens.

(2) The promoters track record as school governors indicates they have the capacity and innovation to promote a good quality school. They are committed to working in partnership to achieve this.

Proposed Timetable

15. If SOAB Members are of the opinion that the proposal be considered for approval by the Cabinet Member, then the following decision making timeline should apply:

Cabinet Member Decision	10 December 2008
Scrutiny Committee (if required)	by 31 December 2008
Final date by which the Local Authority Must make a decision on the proposal	by 12 January 2009
Implementation date	1 September 2010 <i>(but Members' views are sought on modifying this to 1 September 2012)</i>

20. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on;

- a) 'The Homewood Trust bid'
- b) The proposed start date of September 2010 being modified to September 2012, with the decision maker being able to agree a further delay at the request of the promoter if circumstances require.

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The local member is: Mrs Elizabeth Tweed

Background Documents: None

Previous Committee Reports:

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board – 14 November 2007

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board – 19 March 2008