

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 19 March 2008

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

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the need for a new primary school in Ashford. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a competition notice.

Introduction

1. Ashford is a designated growth area with 30,000 new houses planned for the period up to 2030. One major site is Repton Park where 83 replacement dwellings have been built and planning permission granted for 1250 new homes on the site. The developer contribution (S106) agreement has recently been signed off. This provides the County Council with contributions for various services including primary school education. A site for a two form entry school and nursery class, and £4.08M is being provided.

Background Information

2. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 now requires the Local Authority (LA) to undertake a competition to find a promoter for any new primary school. However, before we undertake a competition we are required by statutory guidance to undertake a public consultation. This should ask whether or not the community considers that a new school is needed. At its meeting of 14 November 2007, SOAB agreed that a public consultation should be undertaken. This report sets out the case for a new school and reports back on the outcome of the consultation. Full details of the competition process is set out in the report on New School Competitions presented to the Board on 14 November 2007.

School Capacity in Ashford

3. (1) The Repton Park development has commenced. The school site is available to the LA after the 150th occupation. Details of the anticipated pupil product from the development (approximately 284 in total) is included in Appendix 1.

(2) Appendix 1 sets out the capacities and rolls of the schools within 1, 2 and 3 miles of the development. It also sets out the forecasts for the next 5 years. For primary school aged pupils, KCC strives to ensure that adequate provision exists within 2 miles of their homes, nearer if possible.

(3) Appendix 1 indicates that currently there are sufficient places within 3 miles of Repton Park. These places are in schools situated between one and three miles away. However, there are no places within one mile of the development. Within two miles of the development there are currently 3.4% surplus places and this is forecast to fall to 2.7% by 2012. The corresponding figures for a 3 mile radius are 4.6% reducing to 1.9%.

(4) The map attached as Appendix 2 shows the location of the development site, together with the locations of schools within the 1, 2 and 3 miles radius.

(5) The forecasts indicate that there is a need for new provision to cater for the Repton Park development specifically (i.e. make provision within one mile), and more generally to ensure that the additional pupils generated by the development do not inhibit access to local schools by other families moving into other areas of the Town.

The Proposal

4. (1) The forecasts indicate there is a need for additional provision on the Repton Park site. The proposal is to establish a new primary school for 210 boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 11 years (30 places per year group). This will be a state funded school that provides free education for pupils. A 26 place nursery facility would also be created for use by a private, voluntary or independent provider. The proposed new school would open on 1 September 2010 within the Repton Park housing development in Ashford.

(2) The school should be built with the ability to expand easily to accommodate an additional 210 pupils. This means some spaces, such as the hall, kitchen and staff room, will be large enough for the future needs of the school to minimise disruption. It will be accessible to pupils with physical disabilities and will admit pupils with special educational needs if their needs can be met in a mainstream school. The school will be built primarily to serve the new community from Repton Park and neighbouring developments and will seek to provide high quality learning provision for this new community.

(3) The nursery facility will be attached to the school but will be run separately as a private, voluntary registered or independent nursery. It is likely that the facility will offer full day care either for children aged 0 to 4 years old, or 2 to 4 years old, depending upon demand and the business case. By the time this proposal is implemented, all children aged three and above will be eligible for 15 hours of free early years education per week. This proposed nursery would be registered to provide this free provision.

Consultation Process

5. (1) The consultation document was widely distributed, some of the 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 Clusters, 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.

(2) Approximately 1,000 copies of the document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. A copy is attached as Appendix 3.

(3) A public meeting was held at Highworth Grammar School for Girls on 23 January 2008. Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Dr Ian Craig, Director of Operations, David Adams, Area Education Officer and other KCC Officers. 41 people attended. Around 80% of the audience were residents from the Goat Lees estate. The Local Member, Mrs Elizabeth Tweed and Local Ward Councillor, Mrs Rita Hawes also attended the meeting.

Response to the consultation

Written responses

6 (1) At the end of the consultation period, 16 written responses were received. The consultation asked four questions.

A summary of responses is below:

Question	Yes	No
Do you think there is a need for a new primary school in Repton Park?	16	0
Do you agree that the school should initially offer 30 places per year group (210 places in total) and be for pupils aged 4-11 years?	15	1
Should a 26 place nursery be provided?	16	0
Should the school be built in a way that it can easily be expanded?	14	2

(2) A detailed analysis of written responses is attached in Appendix 4.

(3) A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting are attached in Appendix 5.

Views of Ashford Parents Forum

7. The Ashford One Parents Forum considered the proposal on 23 January 2008. Parents supported a local school in the community. Some questioned whether an all through (primary and secondary) provision could be created.

Views of the Local Member

8. The Local Members is Mrs Elizabeth Tweed who spoke at the public meeting in support of the proposal. She welcomed a school being built at an early stage of the community's development. Also, she supported the calls for further discussion about a new school in Goat Lees.

Views of the Ashford Cluster Boards

9. (1) Ashford 1 Cluster Board is aware of the proposal and expressed support for building new schools in new communities and nursery provision close to areas of need. The Board supported the need for children to be able to walk to school. Four queries were raised – there is nursery provision in the wider areas, will it be affected? How does this link with the possible relocation of Victoria Road School? What about a new school, in the Goat Leas? Will this impact adversely on rural schools?

(2) The views of the Ashford Rural Cluster Board will be reported to the Board meeting on 19 March.

Views of the Local Member of Parliament

10. (1) Mr Damian Green, MP for Ashford is in favour of the building of the school, and would argue very strongly that it should be built in a way that can easily be expanded into two-form entry at a later date. The model of Furley Park school in Park Farm applies here. He had no comments on the provision of a nursery at the school.

(2) Mr Green believes that the school should be built in a way that minimises its carbon footprint. He would be delighted to see either solar or wind power used to generate the school's electricity, and for water saving measures to be used within the school.

Views of Ashford Borough Council

11. David Hill, the Chief Executive and the Regeneration team are aware of the proposal. A response has not yet been received.

Views of Parish Council

12. 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 Education Officer

13. (1) The purpose of this consultation is to determine whether the community support the building of a new school, and if so, whether the proposed 'specification' is right.

(2) There have been few written responses to the consultation. Those received indicate that the proposal for a school to be built early in the development of this community is supported. Equally the specification of the school is generally considered appropriate. (i.e. 1FE, hybrid school, for boys and girls aged 4-11 years, with nursery space).

(3) A few comments were received that I feel require a response:

- The school should be smaller (i.e. remain at 1FE/have smaller classes) – initially the school will be 1FE, but its infrastructure will enable future expansion should this be required. Any expansion will require a further public consultation process. There seems to be support for the hybrid model to ensure we have flexibility in the future. I appreciate the response that requested smaller classes, but the economics of school currently prohibits this.
- Why 210 places if 284 pupils are forecast? – KCC's Primary strategy advocates new schools are built at 1FE or 2FE. Clearly a 1FE school might be too small in the longer term. The housing development is due for completion in 2014. A 2FE school would provide over capacity in the short term, and this is likely to fill with pupils from more distant communities.
- Creation of secondary provision on site – the site is too small to enable an all-through school to be created. This might be something to

consider in future development areas.

- Local nursery provision might be compromised – There is currently a 55 place deficit of nursery places in the area. A 26 place nursery for a 1250 house development does not seem to be creating significant over capacity.

(4) It is evident from the public meeting that there is some parental demand for a primary school to be built in Goat Lees in Ashford (see map at Appendix 2). A school site exists in Goat Lees, but when the housing was built, places existed in other schools. Future housing in the locality is scheduled for the period 2011 – 21. However, a windfall site (the former Police Training Ground) may obtain planning consent in the near future, possibly for 500 houses. In response to these representations I have arranged a public meeting to be held in Goat Lees to listen to the public views and discuss a way forward.

(5) The possible relocation of Victoria Road Primary School has been raised. Victoria Road is currently a no-through road. Kent Highways Services have plans to alter this to create a through road as part of the strategy to break Ashford's ring road. Discussions are ongoing regarding the alignment of the road, its nature, and the impact on the school. The Children, Families and Education Directorate has agreed to relocate the school if necessary, provided this is a cost neutral act (i.e. site and capital is provided in exchange for the school site).

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

14. (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

15. (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 is £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

16. (1) The proposal to consult on the need for a school does not in itself present any equalities issues, provided adequate consideration is given to ensuring consultation process is accessible to all members of the community.

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

(3) If it is decided to proceed with creating a new school, an assessment will be made of the equalities issues arising from any proposal received.

School Effectiveness

17. 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.

Links to Primary Strategy

18. The proposal complies with recommendations 14 (all through primary schools), 18 (organised as 1FE or 2FE), and 19 (new schools built with infrastructure to enable expansion).

Proposed Timetable

19. If it is decided that a public consultation should be undertaken in respect of the proposal, the following timeline could apply:

Report to SOAB	14 November 2007
Consultation document issued	4 January 2008
Public Meeting	Mid January 2008
End of Public Consultation period	15 February 2008
Report back to SOAB	19 March 2008
Cabinet Member Decision	by end of March 2008
Scrutiny Committee (if required)	23 April 2008
Issue Public Notice	30 April 2008
Close of Invitation to bid period	31 August 2008
Report to CFE Senior Management Team	week commencing 1 September 2008
Publication of proposals (Public Notice)	week commencing 15 September 2008
Public Consultation Meeting	week commencing 29 September 2008
Close of Representation period	31 October 2008
Report to SOAB	10 December 2008
Cabinet Member Decision	10 December 2008
Scrutiny Committee (if required)	by 31 December 2008
Implementation date	1 September 2010

20. The views of the School Organisation Board are sought on the issuing of a competition notice.

David Adams
Area Education Officer
Ashford & Shepway
Tel 01233 898559

The local member is: Mrs Elizabeth Tweed

Background documents:

- SOAB paper (dated 14.11.07) 'New School Competitions' (paper outlines process in detail)
- Education & Inspection Act 2006

School Planning data – area of Templar Barracks development

School name	Status	Type	Published admission number 2008 (1)	No. of year groups	School capacity (2)	Actual roll	Forecast roll (3)				
						Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10	Jan-11	Jan-12
Godinton PS	Community	Primary	60	7	420	418	-	-	-	-	-
St Mary's CEPS	Voluntary aided	Primary	60	7	420	426	-	-	-	-	-
St Teresa's Catholic PS	Voluntary aided	Primary	30	7	210	215	-	-	-	-	-
Total pupils - within 1 mile		-	150	-	1050	1059	1064	1068	1072	1076	1085
Surplus/deficit on capacity - within 1 mile (4)		-	-	-	-	-9	-14	-18	-22	-26	-35
Victoria Road PS	Community	Primary	30	7	210	205	-	-	-	-	-
Great Chart PS	Community	Primary	60	7	420	428	-	-	-	-	-
Downs View IS	Community	Infant	90	3	270	264	-	-	-	-	-
Linden Grove PS	Community	Primary	60	7	420	388	-	-	-	-	-
Ashford South/Oak Tree CPS	Community	Primary	60	7	420	405	-	-	-	-	-
Kennington CEJS	Voluntary controlled	Junior	90	4	360	351	-	-	-	-	-
John Wesley	Voluntary aided	Primary	30	7	210	0	-	-	-	-	-
St Simon of England RCPS	Voluntary aided	Primary	30	7	210	204	-	-	-	-	-
Phoenix School	Community	Primary	30	7	210	214	-	-	-	-	-
Beaver Green PS	Community	Primary	60	7	420	543	-	-	-	-	-
Total pupils - within 2 miles		-	600	-	4200	4061	4087	4057	4050	4063	4089
Surplus/deficit on capacity - within 2 miles (4)		-	-	-	-	139	113	143	150	137	111
East Stour PS	Community	Primary	60	7	420	293	-	-	-	-	-
Willesborough IS	Community	Infant	120	3	360	341	-	-	-	-	-
Furley Park PS	Community	Primary	60	7	420	409	-	-	-	-	-
Kingsnorth CEPS	Voluntary controlled	Primary	60	7	420	378	-	-	-	-	-
Willesborough JS	Foundation	Junior	120	4	480	542	-	-	-	-	-
Total pupils - within 3 miles		-	900	-	6300	6024	6081	6074	6079	6111	6181
Surplus/deficit on capacity - within 3 miles (4)		-	-	-	-	276	219	226	221	189	119

Notes:

(1) Maximum number admitted for entry in September 2008

(2) This is the assessed net capacity of the school as yet at Summer 2007 (or the amalgamated net capacity for school reorganisations)

(3) Forecast roll data is based on projections made in Summer 2007. (4) A negative number indicates that there may not be sufficient places available to meet demand. A positive number indicates that there may be surplus school places.

INSERT DOT MAP HERE

**PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN REPTON PARK,
ASHFORD**

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents distributed: 1,000

Responses received: **16**

1. Do you think there is a need for a new primary school in Repton Park, Ashford?	Yes	No	Total
Parent (pre-school)	4		4
Parent (primary)	5		5
Parent (secondary)	1		1
Teacher			
Governor	2		2
Pupil/Student (Pre-school, Primary, Secondary)			
Early Years Provider	1		1
Other	3		3
Total	16		16

2. Do you agree that the school should initially offer 30 places per Year Group (210 places in total), and be for pupils aged 4-11 years?	Yes	No	Total
Parent (pre-school)	4		4
Parent (primary)	5		5
Parent (secondary)		1	1
Teacher			
Governor	2		2
Pupil/Student (Pre-school, Primary, Secondary)			
Early Years Provider	1		1
Other	3		3
Total	15	1	16

If no, please tell us why and what you would like to see instead:

- Smaller classes.

3. Should a 26 place nursery be provided?	Yes	No	Total
Parent (pre-school)	4		4
Parent (primary)	5		5
Parent (secondary)	1		1
Teacher			
Governor	2		2
Pupil/Student (Pre-school, Primary, Secondary)			
Early Years Provider	1		1
Other	3		3
Total	16		16

Should the school be built in a way that it can be easily expanded?	Yes	No	Total
Parent (pre-school)	4		4
Parent (primary)	4	1	5
Parent (secondary)	1		1
Teacher			
Governor	1	1	2
Pupil/Student (Pre-school, Primary, Secondary)			
Early Years Provider	1		1
Other	3		3
Total	14	2	16

If no, please tell us why:

- Other schools (i.e. Phoenix) should expand first.
- Prefer smaller schools – not so over powering for pupils to adapt to.

Other Comments

In support of the proposal:

- Learn by the mistakes of the Goat Lees development and build this school
- The new development warrants a new school, but only one form of entry.
- Consider an expansion to include a new secondary school.
- Use facilities for after school activities.
- Keep the school small as it is better for the children's learning.
- The new school is a greatly needed facility in this part of Ashford. It will be an excellent opportunity to create a better community in North West Ashford.
- The information on projected places needs to be accurate in order not to have a detrimental effect on the school rolls of nearby existing schools.
- Will residents of Orchard Heights, Lodgewood Drive, etc get equal opportunity to send their children to the new school as Repton Park residents.
- Why are plans being made for 210 pupils when the Local Authority has estimated that 300 places will be required? (x2)
- The nursery is absolutely vital
- Build the infrastructure before the population of Ashford expands

Against the proposal:

- New nursery may affect the future sustainability of local playgroup's (i.e Godinton Park playgroup)
- It is unsafe and unreasonable to expect children to walk to a primary school in Repton Park from the Goat Lees area
- The schools in the immediate area to Goat Lees are already full and those with space do not have 5% - 7% flexibility that KCC requires
- A new school at Repton Park will increase the amount of traffic around the Trinity Road, Junction 9 of the M20 and Fougères Way.
- The development on the former Police College site will further increase the need for a primary school on the Goat Lees estate
- A primary school in Goat Lees would act as a focal point for the community.
- A school at Goat Lees would reduce the amount of traffic along Trinity road
- It is 2 years since KCC analysed the demographic of the Goat Lees area – these figures may now be an inaccurate.
- A school in Goat Lees will finally put the wasteland allocated for a school to good use.

PROVIDING A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN REPTON PARK, ASHFORD

Summary of the public meeting held on 23 January 2008 at
Highworth Grammar School for Girls

Issue or Comment	Response
Consultation Process	
<p>The consultation document states that the consultation started on 7 January – does it mean that we have until 15 February to make a response?</p>	<p>Yes, during this consultation process we have made attempts to consult more widely. Today we met with the Ashford One parents forum to discuss the proposal.</p>
Primary School provision on the Goat Lees estate	
<p>It is important to provide the new school on the estate at the same time as people move into the development to serve those children of the community, unlike the situation at Goat Lees.</p> <p>The 3 acre empty site, which was earmarked for the primary school, is now full of rough grass and is attracting anti-social behaviour. If this site is not used as a school it would go back to the developer and would provide over 100 more dwellings, of which, a percentage would have to be affordable housing. This housing would potentially bring a lot more children to the area.</p> <p>Would be impossible for parents to travel to Repton Park without the use of a car. Residents of Goat Lees want to know when they will have a decision about Goat Lees.</p> <p>Why was a primary school promised in the first place?</p> <p>The police training ground, which has been earmarked for housing development (around 500 houses) would surely bring additional children to the area and therefore provide a definite need for a primary school on the Goat Lees site?</p> <p>How does the Local Authority obtain its pupil forecasts?</p>	<p>The Local Authority is fully aware of the site's condition. Historically, the process for opening a new school included contribution from developers. No cash contribution was received from the developer for Goat Lees. To-date we have not been able to make a case on actual numbers to attract Government funding for the school. We have £4 million for the new school at Repton Park. We aim to get it right in Repton Park.</p> <p>The Local Authority never promised that a school would be provided on Goat Lees. There are currently 180 children on the Goat Lees estate who attend neighbouring schools. If a new school were to be built on the estate the children at these neighbouring schools would be sucked out to attend the new school. This would have a detrimental affect on the schools nearby.</p> <p>The Local Authority is aware of the police training ground. It has not yet been sold and that planning permission has not yet been approved. We need to strike a balance between being certain of development and moving forward early at risk, early, as we do not want to build a new school in an area which would not have sufficient children.</p>

<p>Do the forecast roll figures included pupils from all the Ashford developments?</p> <p>What is the rule regarding siblings and over subscribed schools?</p> <p>Will the new school at Repton Park poach teachers from neighbouring schools?</p>	<p>There is a robust process which the Local Authority follows to formulate the forecasts. We know how many children are currently in pre-school settings and schools. We also include health data (eg, births and deaths). We are also aware of pupil mobility, those going into school and out of school.</p> <p>If they have planning consent, yes. We are also aware of the overall development plans and make allowance for these. From the projected forecasts it was clear that a primary new school on the Goat Lees site cannot be justified at the moment. We have reserved a site on the development in case a need for a new school becomes apparent. We do not have the money to carry out the build. It is, worth noting that if there is an economic slow-down and houses start not to sell, then this would be another variable which would need to be considered when planning for the new school.</p> <p>The sibling criteria is higher than distance. All schools have to publish their over subscription criteria. KCC can assure this happens via the schools adjudicator.</p> <p>This is a real issue, but the Local Authority cannot constrain teacher's movements. As Ashford expands we will need more teachers.</p> <p><i>Mrs Valerie Dagger, Chair of the meeting, explained to the audience that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the plans for the new school on Repton Park and not Goat Lees. It was agreed that David Adams would arrange a local meeting with the residents of Goat Lees to discuss all their particular issues.</i></p>
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Hothfield School Closure

<p>Was Hothfield primary school closed as part of Primary Strategy to provide the new primary school on Repton Park?</p>	<p>Primary Strategy was about taking provision out of schools in communities that did not need it. There were two amalgamations in South Ashford, which removed places, but left schools in these communities. Beaver Green was amalgamated with Hopewell on the same site. Ashford South and Oak Tree are to amalgamate onto the Oak Tree site. We are still providing sufficient school provision in these older communities. Phoenix school has been rebuilt with the capacity for 210 pupils, rather than 420. This has been done to provide capacity for Goat Lees.</p> <p>Primary strategy and the reduction of capacity across Ashford was a deliberate strategy. The shape of Ashford is changing and the Local Authority needs to plan to accommodate its future needs.</p>
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	<p>Hothfield primary school was closed as it was not a viable or effective school. There were not enough pupils on roll. It had to be closed.</p>
<p>Sustainability of Neighbouring Nursery Provision</p>	
<p>The new 55 place nursery at Repton Park could affect the viability of the Godinton play group.</p>	<p>The Section 106 agreement provides resources for the creation of new nursery provision. The proposed new nursery would serve the Repton Park community and would not have a knock-on effect to the Godinton playgroup and should therefore not affect an early years registered provision.</p>
<p>Transport Issues</p>	
<p>The infrastructure at Repton Park must be put in at the right time. The local authority needs to ensure that adequate transport is provided. This needs to be talked through during the planning process.</p>	<p>All transport concerns will be picked up through the specification process to seek a promoter. Part of their response has to be about what transport facilities there will be and what other transport arrangements will be put in place, i.e, walking bus.</p> <p>The Kent Freedom Pass which will be rolling out to Secondary children, is not yet in Ashford, but will be soon.</p> <p>Extended schools will ensure the communities will have full access to schools between the hours of 8am and 6pm. This may go some way in reducing traffic congestion around school start and end times of the day.</p>