

## Appendix 2

### **PROPOSAL REGARDING THE POSSIBLE NEED FOR A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THE GOAT LEES ESTATE, ASHFORD.**

#### **Summary of written responses**

Consultation documents distributed: 4,300

Responses received: 80

<b>Q1. Do you think there is a need for a new 210 place primary school in Goat Lees, Ashford?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Und</b>	<b>Total</b>
Parent (pre-school)	14			14
Parent (primary)	28	4		32
Parent (secondary)	8			8
Resident	5	1	1	7
Other	17	1	1	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>80</b>

<b>Q2. Do you think that any new school on the estate should (A) “grow” by one year group at a time, or (B) admit all ages from the start?</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Und</b>	<b>Total</b>
Parent (pre-school)	5	6	1	12
Parent (primary)	9	19		28
Parent (secondary)	1	6	1	8
Resident	2	1		3
Other	12	1		13
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>64</b>

<b>Q3. If you ticked “B” in response to question 2 would you consider moving your child(ren) from another local school?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Parent (pre-school)	6	2	8
Parent (primary)	6	13	19
Parent (secondary)			
Resident			
Other			
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>

#### In support of the proposal

- This school would need to be much better than existing schools to ensure good attendance and to relieve pressure on already popular schools. A swimming pool on site would also increase the popularity of the school.
- While I support this proposal I think another good secondary school is required to cope with the additional children from the primary schools.
- The need for a primary school in Goat Lees is well-founded and would become a vitally important element serving a growing population. (7)
- A new school at Goat Lees would give the estate a community feel. (9)
- It would be located in the very heart of the recently built area. It will become a beacon not only to this area but to local government to show us

that it is also focused on education in the Ashford area and not just profiting from home building.

- An area such as Goat Lees should be served by a “local” school which is within walking distance. This will not only serve the children and families of the area but the community as a whole – providing facilities. (9)
- It would provide a few more jobs in a troubled economy, again benefiting the local community.
- Downsview and Kennington are very congested and with the increase in demand a new school in the area is sorely needed. Goat Lees is the perfect location so long as the catchment area is controlled to avoid additional traffic congestion.
- In order to offer the best education to all pupils, it will be important to ensure that resources are committed to improving facilities at Kennington as well as producing a good new school at Goat Lees.
- I am in support but I am disappointed it has taken so long to reach this stage, especially as we were all promised a local school when we bought out houses. (2)
- Currently we have no option but to drive to the majority of local schools, something which we are all meant to be avoiding. (3)
- Getting to Repton Park School would be a nightmare, you would definitely need a car and there is all the impending roadworks on junction 9 – think of the extra traffic.
- There are clearly more people moving into the area, particularly from London. When the high-speed link opens in December 2009 this will increase and demand for school places will be at a premium. (2)
- I am in support of the proposal but have very strong concerns over the quality of teaching that will be affordable in such a small start up school.
- The school should admit all ages from the start but not become a dumping ground for problem pupils from other local schools.
- I am in support of the proposal but am concerned about the noise and disruption during the building work and the general noise from the school when the children are playing outside.

#### Against the proposal

- We should be building secondary schools as we only have Towers unless they go to the grammar schools. All these primary children will need secondary education. It is ridiculous that we have 20 primary schools and 2 secondary schools.
- I do not think the figures relating to the pre-school population justify a 210-place school.
- I feel that adequate provision could be made at neighbouring schools which would also benefit from increased investment to improve the standard of their buildings and increase their intake. (2)
- I believe that children from Goat Lees estate can benefit enormously from attending a village school which draws its intake from children in all walks of life – including those from rural locations. A school on a housing estate will not benefit from such a rich social mix. This will particularly be the case for lower income families who are more likely not to have a car and are therefore more likely to choose their local school compared to those who will continue to seek a place at what they feel is the “best” local school irrespective of the need to drive their child there.

- I do not believe that a proliferation of small schools that “pop up” to service a particular estate is a sustainable strategy based on projected pupil numbers and the fickle nature of parental choice.
- Has the council considered whether it would be more cost-effective to increase Phoenix School rather than go ahead with a new build in the current economic climate.
- We already put up with constant noise from children playing on the waste ground and other local residents.
- The traffic is already bad locally; a new school would make this worse.
- We would support the new school but only on condition that the car parking issues are resolved from the Eureka Business Park.

**PROPOSAL REGARDING THE POSSIBLE NEED FOR A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THE GOAT LEES ESTATE, ASHFORD.**

**Summary of the public meeting held on 25 November 2009 at the Enterprise Centre, Towers School, Ashford.**

Approximately 45 people attended the meeting including parents, local residents and other interested parties. Also in attendance were KCC Members Richard King and Elizabeth Tweed and Ashford Borough Council Member Rita Hawes

<b>Issue or comment</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>Would like to know more about the promoter side of the business. Assuming there is a need for the school the next stage is to appoint a promoter. What is the financial commitment required from the promoter?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no financial commitment from the promoter. The expectation is that the Local Authority would need to find the money from Developer Contributions, Basic Need etc.</li> <li>• In terms of who the promoters are, typically they are organisations, eg Woodard Schools, Edutrust etc. There are a number of big national institutions who would come forward, although most of them want to open secondary schools. At Bolney School in West Sussex a parent group came forward. They formed a charitable trust. The trust promotes governors to the Governing Body.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the promoter fund the running expenses of the school or is it the Local Authority?</li> <li>• What is the added value that promoters bring?</li> <li>• What control do promoters have on the direction of the school?</li> <li>• What is involved for a community group as a promoter?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The running costs are the same as for any other maintained school. The school receives money in the same way as every other school. Driven by the number of children on roll and some fixed cost funding that comes in through schools – standards grant etc. It is the responsibility of staff and Governing Body to run and manage the school.</li> <li>• In terms of what the promoters bring, if you have a high-performing school or HE institution as a promoter they will bring expertise. If an external company, they would bring strong</li> </ul>

	<p>governance – people with business expertise etc. So securing the strength of the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The promoters (or Trust) would shape the ethos of the school if that is what they wanted. Notionally they could de-select Governing Body members if necessary.</li> <li>• A community group would form a charitable trust. The Trust appoints the Governing Body. The Governing Body could, eg, expect the school to open in the evenings etc. The promoters (or Trust) can exert their power through their ability to appoint governors.</li> </ul>
<p>What about the viability of the school long-term. If it goes up then comes down suddenly what will happen?</p>	<p>Exactly the same as any other school. If it is not good the Local Authority could intervene. Theoretically the LA could even remove the Governing Body or powers of delegation.</p>
<p>Does it slow up the process if no promoter comes forward?</p>	<p>No it should not. If no one comes forward the LA would go to the Secretary of State and say the community thinks it's a good idea and no promoter has come forward. Would you now agree that the LA can promote a community school without having to go back through all of this process? Secretary of State may so no – run it again and see if you can get a promoter to come forward. There may be an argument in current economic climates about how many organisations may feel they have the capacity to be involved in this sort of thing. So we would be in an unknown. We would then be looking to move forward with a proposal of our own and we could submit our own proposal at that point and it may be that we would just be saying it's the only proposal and go to the Adjudicator. That may be the quickest route.</p>
<p>There is a tremendous amount of enthusiasm about the community putting forward their own idea for promoting.</p>	<p>It would potentially speed up the process. The Secretary of State may agree to proceed without competition. Kent used this once on</p>

	<p>an amalgamation of an Infant and Junior School. Other exemptions might include a church aided school. And, potentially, a parent or resident association (a Trust school). In that case the Secretary of State may agree to exemption.</p>
<p>Re the Promoter – is it beneficial to have a promoter? Will it help the process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The theory is that promoters bring something positive, eg an industrial view of the world. Actively involve industry and others in the educational process.</li> <li>• Whether people feel that a promoter would be needed. The community could ask that the LA promote the school as a community school. Kent can put in a proposal (not all Local Authorities can). All we would be doing is putting a proposal in.</li> </ul>
<p>Assuming the school proposal does not go ahead what happens to this packet of land? Does the LA have a contingency plan for its use? What else could the area be used for?</p>	<p>The LA secured it through Developer Contributions. If the land is not substantially procured by 1 Jan 2012 then the land would go back to the developer.</p>
<p>Not sure how many houses would fit on that piece of land. Might be 50 houses. What would the demand be then for a new school?</p>	
<p>The estate is being impacted by new offices in Eureka Park – not sufficient parking there for office staff. Those people are parking on the estate.</p>	<p>If you look at the school as an employer the school would have to adhere to any policies. Community mix. Ideally people walk to work and to school.</p>
<p>I live directly opposite the school site. My child will start school in 2012. Problems with parking in our road from the pub and offices. Could parking for the community centre be used for the school? More provision is needed. If the school is a community provision then parents would walk their child to school. Rather have a school than more houses.</p>	<p>The road has been designed for housing, industrial element, school etc. We as an Education Authority go through statutory process re the new school. Planners go through the planning process. Clearly need to see what will be done there.</p>
<p>How much is the internal decision-making process stand alone? Are we just looking at the Goat Lees area? How much have other schools in the area been taken into consideration? My children go to Kennington JS. They had issues with funding and modernising the school. We had a</p>	<p>The two issues are separate. We need more capacity. The site has been given to increase capacity. The developer would not be happy if the site were used as a replacement school. Funding for this school will be Developer Contributions and the rest from capital programmes,</p>

<p>parents meeting where one of the local Borough Councillors suggested we knock down Kennington JS and build a school at Goat Lees. I'm wondering how much of your decision-making process is purely on the basis of Goat Lees.</p>	<p>particularly any Basic Need bids we can make for capital funding. Finding resources for this will be a challenge.</p>
<p>If a need is determined what could stop that school going in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community group could come back and say enlarge Phoenix.</li> <li>• The LA does not have the money – we could go to other schools and ask them to have mobiles.</li> <li>• There is a national election looming. The competition process could disappear.</li> <li>• We might have a strong lobby from other schools saying they do not want another school.</li> <li>• The Cabinet Member will ask if the community said go forward. If the community think it's no good we would need to review our plans. The Cabinet Member may say no other way but competition process.</li> <li>• Different information may come forward to say that the proposal was wrong, ie forecast process is flawed therefore we do not need it.</li> <li>• No planning consent.</li> <li>• Church connection: If only one promoter comes forward – an extreme religious group for example – the LA would have the right to reject. We might then have to start again.</li> </ul>
<p>Need to know more about the decision to be made about growing by one year group or admitting all ages at once. I have a 1 year old and a 4 year old. I'm currently driving 15 minutes but would prefer to walk.</p>	<p>The reality is that this would be a LA decision. First stage is determining what we would specify. The Public Notice seeking promoters would spell that out, which is why we have asked the question and not left it to the promoters. Promoters may come back with a better idea. We could say no and rule them out.</p>
<p>Re the two options: YR –v- 4 classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it starts with Year R will it dilute the quality of the headteacher?</li> <li>• Will the headteacher be shared with another school?</li> </ul>	<p>Could be both or either if the school could recruit a headteacher under those circumstances. The LA <u>currently</u> funds new schools with a guaranteed budget for the first 3 years. Might agree to fund for 90 children (if 30 children on roll) so</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Or will the school automatically start with a headteacher from the outset who will then go on to recruit further teachers as the school expands?</li> </ul>	<p>school can therefore afford to appoint more staff. Funding a school for 30 children is not viable.</p> <p>If looking at Year R only there are options as to how we address issues about having a cohort on their own at that stage, and about staffing. One option might be to see if we could open the school in conjunction with other local schools, whereby we could treat it as a satellite site for a period of time. That way you would have a network for professional management purposes, personal development purposes, for bringing in school lunches etc as well as some of the social issues.</p>
<p>Do you find that where you have such structures elsewhere in the county that broadly the education of the children remains as good as if it had its own independent headteacher from the very outset?</p>	<p>Cannot think of any schools that we have opened in that sort of model. Church Primary School in Hawkinge started with 3 classrooms of children and a headteacher in a mobile. We have a number of federations with a single headteacher over more than one school. That sort of model works well. The headteacher age profile is gearing to retirement age. We are increasingly looking at options to retain headteachers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 children per year and that's all it will be?</li> <li>• My child is due to start in September 2012. I'm not sure I want my child to go to a guinea-pig school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will be a finite size. It cannot be larger. Repton Park is cheaper to build. It would be cheaper to expand Phoenix than build here. Phoenix is doing really well in new buildings. We took the number down. If we expand Phoenix would that solve the problems? The community needs to make a decision on that. Local Authority has some schools that are smaller [than 1fe].</li> <li>• Guinea-pig school: If we say Year R only, we have never done that. 4 classrooms, we have done that.</li> </ul>
<p>Why was Phoenix School made 1fe a few years ago, when presumably there was not a need for it?</p>	<p>Back in history. Phoenix has dramatically improved since that decision was made. Credit to the school staff. At the time not one child from this estate went to Phoenix. People could say – we think you should expand that school. We took Phoenix down as the number on roll suggested that at the</p>



	time. Now a school is needed here.
Re the timetable. How crucial is it that we meet 15 December [close of public consultation period]. Will the proposal not go ahead if there is not enough support?	It is not a voting process. Not about numbers. Clearly, if people are saying this is broadly the right solution we would want to continue with the consultation process.

### Comments in support of the proposal

- We do need another school due to the amount of development in Ashford. I do not believe there is a single bad school in Ashford. My concerns: If it's primarily a Christian school there is a tendency to introduce Doctrines into it. Then you can fall into the traps of the Equal Opportunities Act 2003, which applies to children as well as adults. I think having it as a community school is a much better idea. On the whole, I'm for it. There will be more traffic, but the pros – FE in an up and coming area, Ashford's links to Northern Europe and London. Cannot see a downside.
- Pro having a school in the community. It would benefit the community hugely.
- Whole heartedly agree. Overwhelming support on the estate. The number here tonight is not reflective of the numbers who support the school.
- Fully support the proposal. Low attendance tonight, but evening attendance can be difficult.
- There are not many people here tonight. I'm reporting back to 2 sets of neighbours and a wife and an 18 month old. Looking forward to going to plays etc – not just the classrooms.
- Guinea-pig school: How exciting it would be to be a pioneer pupil and look back and say – I was there.

### Comments against the proposal

- My house is very close to the school site. I am not totally opposed to the school but it will be in the middle of a residential area. Infrastructure of the road – will not cope. Certain times of day – the new shops, pub, offices by the traffic lights – the road is congested. Other schools are developed next to residential areas. When I bought my house I was told the land would be waste land – not a school or housing. If I'd known then what I know now I would not have bought the house.

### The following points were clarified by local authority officers at the public meeting

- The cost of a new primary school would be about £4m.
- The timetable and the need to stick to the timetable in this case as it is tight. LA will not start the design process until people say they want the school as the design etc costs money.
- Cabinet Member does not have to follow the view of SOAB. Members are keen on consultation. Unless there is strong resistance we would not expect them to say no.