

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

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 February 2010

Subject: THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF LALEHAM GAP (COMMUNITY SPECIAL) SCHOOL

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to relocate Laleham Gap (Community Special) School into purpose-build buildings on a single site at Newlands Lane, Ramsgate. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice.

This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to School Organisation Advisory Board of 4 November 2009

Introduction

1. (1) Laleham Gap School was established in April 2005 as the County's specialist provision for high functioning pupils aged 3 to 16 years with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or Speech and Language disorders. The new school was established from the amalgamation of Laleham School in Margate and Gap House School in Broadstairs and since 2005 has continued to operate across both sites.

(2) Under Wave 4 of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, secondary and special schools in Thanet will benefit from substantial capital investment, with the potential to deliver exciting and innovative design solutions to meet current and future learning needs.

The Proposal

2. (1) The proposal is to relocate Laleham Gap School to a site at Newland's Lane (off of Pysons Road) in Ramsgate. The BSF programme will enable the complete rebuilding of the school to a design of the highest quality. Building work would commence late 2010 and be completed by April/September 2012. The new buildings would accommodate 164 pupils, 44 places for pupils aged 3 to 11 years, 120 places for pupils aged 11 to 16 years and would include 60 residential spaces. It would mean that for the first time the school can be consolidated on a single site with enhanced opportunities for cross phase association, more efficient timetabling and access to state of the art facilities.

(2) The Ellington and Hereson school is already established on the large site at Newland's Lane and the relocation of Laleham Gap School, adjacent to The Ellington Hereson School would realise the site's optimum potential. The two schools would occupy separate and distinct buildings and each would be self sufficient in terms of learning space and facilities. The possibility of deriving added value from sharing some sports facilities, etc, would be explored carefully.

(3) There is a Public Right of Way (PROW) running through the site. It is therefore proposed that the school will be designed with the buildings on one side and the playing field on the other. The PROW would be fenced off with 'crossing gates' between the buildings and the playing field where pupils would cross with supervision.

The Consultation

3. (1) The consultation document was distributed to parents/carers, staff, governors of Laleham Gap School and The Ellington & Hereson School, local residents, County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, local library, the District Council, PCT and others in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website and the link to the website widely circulated via email.

(2) Approximately 1800 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. A copy is attached as Appendix 1.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) Twenty one responses have been received, of which 18 are in favour, and 3 are opposed.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 2.

Public Meeting Responses

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

Views of Local Members

5. (1) Mr Michael Jarvis and Mr Chris Wells are the local members for the current Laleham Gap School site. Mr John Kirby and Mrs Elizabeth Green are the local members for the proposed new site at Newlands Lane in Ramsgate.

(2) Mr Michael Jarvis is fully supportive for this proposed relocation of Laleham Gap School and the benefits it will bring to both staff and pupils respectively.

(3) Mr Chris Wells agrees that it is an excellent proposal and gives it his full support.

(4) Mr John Kirby fully supports the proposal as long as Laleham Gap School and The Ellington & Hereson School retain their independence.

(5) Mrs Elizabeth Green has not submitted her views on this proposal.

Views of Local Members of Parliament

6. The Local MPs for the current and proposed site are Dr Stephen Ladyman and Mr Roger Gale. Both were sent hard copies of the consultation document and email reminders, but have not responded so far. If subsequently responses are received, their views will be reported at the meeting.

Views of Thanet District Council

7. Thanet District Council was consulted and hard copies of the consultation document were sent to the Leader and Chief Executive. This was followed up with an email reminder. Responses have not yet been received but will be reported to the meeting should they be available.

Views of the Governing Body

8. The governing body is resolved that the relocation represents the best available option for the school and that it will deliver enhanced facilities for students.

Views of the Local Children's Services Partnership Boards

9. (1) The issue of the relocation of Laleham Gap School was brought to the attention of Thanet 1 Headteachers and the LCSP Board last term and no objections were raised. Nedine Watson-Cutts, Thanet 1 LCSP Manager gives her full support to the plans as she is aware of the limitations of the current site, and agrees that purpose built accommodation would greatly benefit the school and would enable it to meet the needs of the pupils.

(2) The Thanet 2 LCSP Board supports the proposal as the proposed relocation will consolidate the currently separate Laleham and Gap House provision on a single site and provide the best possible learning environment for pupils and staff.

Views of Highways

10. Highways have not raised objections in principle to the proposal but would be looking for the following concerns to be addressed in any building proposal that comes forward for the proposed site.

- The amount of additional traffic that would be expected to be generated and how this would affect the operation of the junctions, with a view to providing mitigating measures if necessary.
- Car parking (including management of the same to ensure Newlands Lane does not get blocked with parked cars).
- Suitable access and drop off/pick up arrangements for pupils.
- Construction management.

Views of the Area Children's Services Officer

11. (1) The proposal will enable all of the students at Laleham Gap School to benefit from new, high quality learning facilities. For the first time since Laleham and Gap House

schools were amalgamated, the success school would be operating from a single site with all the attendant benefits for organisation and management which accrue from co-location. None of the technical issues relating to access and circulation of traffic, etc, are insurmountable. Goodwill exists on all sides to make this work. Effective partnership is now the key to translating exciting ideas into reality and providing all the students with facilities fit for 21 century learning.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

12. (1) The new school building will be funded through BSF. The intention is to sell the existing Laleham site and to use the capital receipt to support KCC's contribution to the broader BSF programme. The existing site at Gap House will be adapted for use by Stone Bay Special School as the centre for its residential provision.

(2) Maintenance and other premises related costs are likely to be reduced with consolidation and new build facilitating more efficient use of space with modern heating, lighting and utilities.

Human

(3) There will be minimal human resource implications beyond some potential efficiencies arising from the use of a single site. Most staff will transfer to the new location.

Proposed Timetable

13. If it is decided that a public notice should be issued in respect of the proposal, the following timetable could apply.

Cabinet Member decision (to issue a public notice)	End of February 2010
Public Notice period	5 March to 16 April 2010
Decision by Local Authority	May 2010
Adjudication (if required)	June/July 2010
Building work commences	Late 2010
Implementation	April/September 2012

Recommendation

14. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:
- (a) the relocation of Laleham Gap School and
 - (b) if agreed, the issuing of a public notice.

Martyn Doole

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The Local Members are

Michael Jarvis, Chris Wells, Elizabeth Green and John Kirby

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 November 2009