

By: ROSALIND TURNER, MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

To: SARAH HOHLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Subject: POSSIBLE NEED FOR A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THE GOAT LEES ESTATE, ASHFORD

Classification: UNRESTRICTED

Summary: The Cabinet Member is requested to agree to the proposal for a new primary school on the Goat Lees estate, Ashford and issue a competition notice to initiate a competition to establish a new primary school on a site within the Goat Lees estate

Introduction

1. The School Organisation Advisory Board supported a recommendation to consult on the proposal to issue a competition notice to initiate a competition to establish a new primary school on a site within the Goat Lees estate

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 17 July 2008, 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 are set out in the report on New School Competitions presented to the Board on 14 November 2007.

The Proposal

3. (1) The schools within one mile of Goat Lees (Downsview Infant School, Kennington (Church of England) Junior School, and Phoenix Community Primary School) are nearly full (18 spare places) and there is forecast to be a shortfall of places over the next five years. The forecasts for children aged 4 years old within three miles of the Goat Lees estate show that four extra reception classes may need to be opened by September 2013.

(2) The proposal is to seek a promoter by using a public notice to establish a 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. The

proposed new school would open on 1 September 2012 on the site within the Goat Lees estate. Two options regarding how the school opened were consulted upon. These options were open with a Reception class only and grow by one class per year over the following seven years; or initially open with 4 classrooms (Year R, Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4 and Years 5 & 6) and open further classes as demand for places in the school increases.

The Consultation

4. (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, primary schools in the Ashford area, Diocesan Boards, Early Years settings in the area, key colleagues within the Children, Families and Education Directorate and residents of the Goat Lees estate.

(2) Approximately 4,300 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses.

(3) A public consultation meeting was held on 25 November. It was chaired by Mr Northey, a School Organisation Advisory Board member. In attendance was Mr David Adams. Approximately 45 members of the public attended the meeting.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

5. 80 responses have been received, of which 72 are in favour, 6 against and 2 undecided.

Views of Local Members

6. (1) Elizabeth Tweed is fully supportive of the proposal.

(2) Richard King is fully supportive of the proposal.

Views of Local Member of Parliament

7. Mr Damian Green provided the following comment, "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

8. Ashford Borough Council has not formally responded but the local councillor Mrs R Thomas is supportive of the proposal and would be very keen to see a school put on this site.

Views of the Parish Council

9. The proposal has received a lot of support from the Parish Council.

Views of the Local Children's Service Partnership Board

10. The Local Children's Service Partnership Board has been informed of the proposal

Resource Issues

Capital

11. (1) The site of this development is available via developer contributions. The anticipated cost for a 1fe school is £4m. *This* is available from developer contributions and supported borrowing approval in respect of new school places.

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.

Views of the School Organisation Advisory Board

12. The majority of the School Organisation Advisory Board supported the proposal to issue a competition notice to initiate a competition to establish a new primary school on a site within the Goat Lees estate. The report is attached as appendix 1a.

Recommendation

13. The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education is asked to agree to the issuing of a competition notice to initiate a competition to establish a new primary school on a site within the Goat Lees estate.

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The Local Members are Elizabeth Tweed and Richard King

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board - 17 July 2008

School Organisation Advisory Board - 7 January 2010