

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

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 7 January 2009

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

Classification: Unrestricted

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

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**This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to School Organisation Advisory Board of 17 July 2008**

## **Introduction**

1. (1) Ashford is a designated growth area with 30,000 new houses planned for the period up to 2030. The Goat Lees estate was constructed between the years 1998 and 2005. 732 properties have been built. A developer contribution of a 1FE school site was provided. The condition is that a school must be substantially procured within 12 years of the commencement of the relevant phase of development or the site returned. For the avoidance of doubt, it is assumed that 1 January 2012 is the trigger day for returning the site (although legally it may be later).

## **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 (outcomes detailed at Appendix 2). 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. A copy is attached as Appendix 1.

(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. (1) 80 responses have been received. The consultation asked three questions. A summary of responses is below:

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Und</b>
Q1. Do you think there is a need for a new 210 place primary school in Goat Lees, Ashford?	<b>72</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>A</b>	<b>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>29</b>	<b>33</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
Q3. If you ticked "B" in response to question 2 would you consider moving your child(ren) from another local school?	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	

(2) A detailed analysis 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**

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 Diocesan Authorities**

10. No comments have been received.

### **Views of the Partnership Board**

11. These are awaited.

### **Views of Highways (if appropriate)**

12. These are awaited.

### **Views of the Area Children’s Services Officer**

13. (1) The purpose of this consultation is to determine whether the community agree there is a need for a new school, and if so, in what manner the school should open.

(2) The school roll forecasts suggest a school will be required to meet the needs of pupils in the locality, particularly those starting in reception classes. There is a need to

carefully introduce new school capacity in a way that is targeted to need (ie Year R places), so as to avoid disrupting neighbouring schools and the education of pupils within these.

## **Resource Issues**

### *Capital*

14. (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.

## **Proposed Timetable**

15. If it is decided that this proposal proceeds to competition the following timetable could apply:

Issue Invitation to Bid Public Notice	12 Feb 2010
Close of Invitation to Bid period	14 Jun 2010
Publication of proposals (Public Notice)	2 Jul 2010
Public Consultation Meeting	w/c 12 Jul 2010
Close of Representation Period	13 Aug 2010
Cabinet Member Decision OR	by 13 Oct 2010
Referral to Adjudicator for determination	by 27 Aug 2010
Adjudicator Decision – if referred	Oct/Nov 2010
Implementation date	1 Sep 2012

## **Recommendation**

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

David Adams  
Area Children's Services Officer

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The Local Members are Elizabeth Tweed and Richard King

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*Background Documents:*

None

*Previous Committee Reports:* SOAB report seeking permission to consult: 17 July 2008