

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

To: Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

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

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Cabinet member is request to agree to issue a public notice to relocate Laleham Gap (Community Special) School into purpose-build buildings on a single site at Newlands Lane, Ramsgate.

Introduction

1. The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 4 November 2009 supported a proposal to consult on the proposal to close the maintained nursery class at Aylesham Primary School and to change the age range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 1 September 2010

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.

Responses to the Public Consultation

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

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 the Governing Body

6. 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

7. (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

8. 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.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

9. (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.

Views of the School Organisation Advisory Board

10. The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 4 February 2010 unanimously supported the proposal to issue a public notice to relocate Laleham Gap (Community Special) School into purpose-build buildings on a single site at Newlands Lane, Ramsgate. The report is attached as appendix 1.

Recommendation

14. The Cabinet Member is requested to agree to issue a public notice to relocate Laleham Gap (Community Special) School into purpose-build buildings on a single site at Newlands Lane, Ramsgate.

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

School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 February 2010