ITEM 12

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE KELSO HIGH SCHOOL

Report by Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 April 2013

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the results of the statutory consultation on the proposal to relocate Kelso High School to a new site. This consultation was carried out in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

1.2 Scottish Borders Council is committed to the construction of a new secondary school in Kelso following a successful bid to the Scottish Government’s ‘Phase 3 Schools for the Future’ programme.

1.3 As the intention is to build a new school on a new site the Council is required to carry out a statutory consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

1.4 A proposal paper, including a statement of educational benefits, was produced and widely circulated among all stakeholders. This was followed up by an online consultation, a Public Meeting and engagement with current pupils within the school. Education Scotland through HMIE also visited the school and spoke with teachers, staff and pupils.

1.5 The consultation showed unanimous support to the proposal to relocate the school to the Council’s preferred site at Angraflat, Kelso.

1.6 Council officers are committed to an ongoing dialogue with the key stakeholders as plans for the new school campus develop.

1.7 There were some concerns expressed by parents during the consultation around safe routes to school once the new building has been completed and these will be addressed as plans develop.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Council:-

a) Notes the outcome of the statutory consultation and the unanimous support for Kelso High School and proceed with plans to relocate to the Council’s preferred site at Angraflat.

b) Commits to an ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders – staff, parents, pupils and the wider community as more detailed plans for the new school campus are developed.
3 BACKGROUND

3.1 On 26 June 2012, the Executive Committee of Scottish Borders Council agreed to make a bid to the Scottish Government’s 'Phase 3 Schools for the Future' programme. The bid was for a project that would relocate the existing High School in Kelso to a new build off Angraflat Road in the town. This was the preferred location following an option appraisal process.

3.2 The bid was successful in that a conditional offer of funding was made in September 2012 by the government agency Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). The offer was for eligible costs up to a maximum of 2/3rds funding of the project. The project was identified as being taken forward on a Design, Build, Finance and Maintain type of contract. The Council will enter into a contract with a development company (Hub South East) to cover both the construction and maintenance of the building over a concessionary period. This has similarities with the Council’s 3HS PPP project.

3.3 The Government award was given to Scottish Borders Council with a condition that the Council should make every effort to commence construction within 12-18 months of the award.

3.4 On 29 October 2012, the Council’s Capital Management Group agreed to release initial enabling funding to progress with the early design stages.

3.5 On 7 February 2013, Elected Members approved a revised Capital Financial Plan to include the Kelso High School project at a cost of £18.6M.

3.6 At their meeting on 27 November 2012, the Council’s Education Committee considered and approved a report initiating the statutory consultation on the proposal to relocate Kelso High School in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

3.7 As a result the following actions were agreed and implemented:

- an educational benefits statement was prepared
- a proposal paper was published
- notice of the proposal was given to the relevant consultees and invite representations
- a Public Meeting was held
- the proposals were reviewed

3.8 Key stakeholders engaged in the consultation were:

- The School Parent Council
- Parents
- Primary School parents who may be affected
- Pupils
- Staff
- Unions
- Community users of the school
- Local Community Council
4. THE CONSULTATION

4.1 The consultation process commenced on 3 January 2013 and ended on 14 February 2013. The proposal paper including the educational benefits statement was published on the Council website and the key stakeholders were contacted by letter. Local Ward Elected Members were also briefed.

4.2 There were 27 responses to the proposal on the Council website. In general these responses are overwhelmingly in support of the proposal paper and the relocation of the school. A range of issues have been raised by the respondents which will be dealt with during the next stages of planned consultation with stakeholders as we move towards agreeing the detailed plans of the new school. The responses from the Council website did not identify anyone who opposes the Council’s plan to relocate the school. (A summary of online responses are attached as Appendix 1 to this report).

4.3 On Monday 28 January 2013, a Public Meeting was held in Kelso High School attended by around 50 people. The Executive Member for Education Chaired the meeting and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning presented a resume of the proposal paper and the educational benefits statement. Once again the general view was one of support for the proposal although those attending sought assurances that there would be continuing involvement in the design and planning process of the new school. There was particular interest in the potential of the sports facilities attached to the school and relevant community access as well as the planned future of the current school building in Bowmont Street. (A summary of the key issues raised at the public meeting are attached as Appendix 2 to this report).

4.4 There was some consultation with pupils of Kelso High School held on Tuesday 5 February 2013 and facilitated by Headteacher, Ruth McKay and CL&D worker Holly Young. Ongoing dialogue with pupils at Kelso High School is planned as the design stage of the new school is progressed.

4.5 HMI as part of Education Scotland visited Kelso during the consultation process and looked at the following issues:-

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school;
- any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the Council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- benefits which the Council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the Council’s reasons for coming to these beliefs.

4.6 HMI concluded that the proposal to build a replacement for Kelso High School is welcomed by all the key stakeholders. They feel strongly that the proposed new school will be of benefit to the local community and provide a much improved environment for learning.

4.7 The Council published a final proposal paper and this was placed on the Council website for final comment between 15 March 2013 and 5 April 2013. There were no additional comments from stakeholders.
5. CONCLUSION

5.1 As a result of this statutory consultation and on evaluation of the range of responses from the Council website, the Public Meeting, the Pupil Council and the views of Education Scotland it is recommended that the Council proceed with plans to relocate the school to its preferred site. There are strong levels of support from the statutory consultation for the re-location and Council officials are committed to continuing engagement and dialogue with the key stakeholders as we move towards the next stages of design and build. There were some concerns expressed by parents during the consultation around safe routes to school once the new building has been completed. These concerns will be addressed in the next phase of planning.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial
There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations
(a) The report fully describes all the elements of risk that have been identified in relation to this project and no specific additional concerns need to be addressed.

5.3 Equalities
(a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

5.4 Acting Sustainably
(a) There are no economic, social or environmental effects as a result of this report and its recommendations

5.5 Carbon Management
(a) There is no impact on the Council’s carbon emissions as a result of this report and its recommendations

5.6 Rural Proofing
(a) N/A

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Head of Audit and Risk, Corporate Communication, the Clerk to the Council and the Head of Strategic Policy are being consulted. Any comments received will be incorporated in the final report.
Approved by

Director of Education & Lifelong Learning  Signature – Glenn Rodger

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Background Papers: [insert list of background papers used in compiling report]

Previous Minute Reference: Education Committee, 27 November 2012

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