

Education & Lifelong Learning
Galashiels Academy School Relocation Consultation
Report



Please share your comments on the proposal or make alternative suggestions, by contacting us before 5pm on 27 June 2023:-

In writing: Galashiels Academy School Consultation
Children and Young People's Services
Scottish Borders Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells
Melrose
TD6 0SA;

By Email: schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk;

Online: [Galashiels Academy Consultation Report Survey](#)

SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS FOR THE CONSULTATION REPORT

Introduction

- 1.1 This Consultation Report has been issued as part of a statutory consultation process required in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended (**2010 Act**). The 2010 Act sets out the consultation process that local authorities must follow when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools – such as a closure, relocation or change of catchment area.
- 1.2 The Consultation report has been issued as a result of the decision by Scottish Borders Council on 17 December 2020 to formally undertake a statutory consultation process in respect of a proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy to a campus site comprising the existing school site and part of the town's Scott Park; and build a new Galashiels Academy and Community Campus.
- 1.3 This Consultation Report details the Council's compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

Proposal Paper

- 1.4 The Council prepared a Proposal Paper which was published on 13 March 2023. A copy of that Proposal Paper (attached in **Appendix 1**).
- 1.5 A Copy of the Proposal Paper was made available in these locations:-
 - Council Headquarters, Newton St Boswells TD6 OSA
 - Galashiels Academy
 - Balmoral Primary School
 - Burgh Primary School
 - Glendinning Terrace Primary School
 - Langlee Primary School
 - St Margaret's RC Primary School
 - St Peter's Primary School
 - Clovenfords Primary School
 - Fountainhall Primary School
 - Heriot Primary School
 - Stow Primary School
 - Tweedbank Primary School
 - Galashiels Library

It was also published online at Council's website -

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/children-and-young-people/galaacampus>

Advertising the Proposal Paper and Consultation Process

1.6 The publication of the Proposal Paper was advertised in the Border Telegraph and Southern Reporter, on the week commencing 6 March 2023, providing the dates for the consultation period and the public meeting. There were also press releases made during the consultation process.

1.7 Notice of the Proposals were sent to:-

- The parents/carers of the children who attend an affected School;
- The Parent Council of the affected school;
- The parents/ carers of any children likely to attend the affected School/s or any affected school within two years of the date of the publication of the proposal Paper, as far as known to the Council;
- The Staff (teaching or non-teaching) at an affected School ;
- Any trade Union which is representative of the staff;
- Community Councils;
- The Community Planning Partnership (as defined in section 4.5 of the Community empowerment Act(Scotland) Act 2015 for the area where an affected School is situated or any other community planning partnership that the Education Authority considers relevant;
- The constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament
- The Constituency Member of Parliament
- The list Members of the Scottish Parliament

Length of Consultation Period

1.8 The Consultation for the Proposals ran from 13 March 2023 and ended on 12 May 2023. This period allowed for the statutory minimum of 30 School days. 127 on-line responses were received. The representations are summarised and responded to in Section 5 below.

Public Meeting

1.9 A public meeting was held on 20th April 2023 at Galashiels Academy from 18:00 until 20.30. (meeting ended at 21.30) Details of the Meeting Notes are included in **Appendix 4**.

Meetings with Pupils and Staff

1.10 Meetings and Assemblies were held with pupils and Staff in the affected Schools. A record of views, queries and responses is included in Section 4.

Involvement of Education Scotland

1.11 Education Scotland was notified in advance of this Statutory Consultation process being approved. On completion of the Statutory Consultation period, a copy of the Proposal Paper was sent by Scottish Borders Council to Education Scotland. Education Scotland

also received a copy of all relevant additional materials including the minutes of public meeting, written representations and responses received and by the Council following the consultation period.

- 1.12 Education Scotland has prepared a report on the educational aspects of the Proposals, based on the representations and documents mentioned above as well as their interviews with pupils, parents and staff. In preparing their report, Education Scotland visited the affected schools and made reasonable enquiries of people there as they considered appropriate. A copy of the Education Scotland report can be found at **Appendix 2** and also on the Education Scotland Website at:- <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/thematic-reports/school-consultation-reports/>
- 1.13 Issues raised in the Education Scotland Report with regards to the proposals and the Authority's responses are set out in Section 6 of this Consultation report.

Preparation of the Public Consultation Report

- 1.14 The Council has reviewed the Proposal having regard to the responses received during the consultation period and the Education Scotland Report. The Consultation Report will be published on **6 June 2023** and is available for further consideration for a period of three weeks from that date, until **27 June 2023**. The intention is that interested parties should have time to consider the Consultation Report and if they so wish, to raise concerns and pose alternative solutions by making written or electronic submissions to:

Galashiels Academy Consultation
Education and Lifelong Learning
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells
Melrose
TD6 OSA

01835 825 080 or by email to Schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk ; or

[Galashiels Academy Consultation Report Survey](#); or



Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically, should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly

available, they should clearly write on the document: "I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Scottish Borders Council". Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available.

For any written or electronic response to be considered it must be received by the Council no later than 5.00pm on the last day of the three week period being **27 June 2023**.

NO decision will be taken in regard to the proposal by the Council until the full statutory consultation process has been properly completed -

****It should be noted that in order to progress the building programme and to comply with funding requirements, the decision was taken by the Council's project board to allow preparatory works to progress in tandem with the Consultation process. The project board has acknowledged that there is a risk attached to undertaking such preparatory works, before a final decision is made regarding the Academy, but it has balanced this risk against the budgetary and programme pressures of delivering a new School if the decision is made to proceed with the new school****

Distribution

1.14 A copy of the Consultation Report will be made available free of charge for public consultation from **6 June 2023** in these locations –

- Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA
- Galashiels Academy
- Balmoral Primary School
- Burgh Primary School
- Glendinning Terrace Primary School
- Langlee Primary School
- St Margaret's Primary School
- St Peter's Primary School
- Clovenfords Primary School
- Fountainhall Primary School
- Heriot Primary School
- Stow Primary School
- Tweedbank Primary School
- Galashiels Library

and published on the Scottish Borders Council Website :-

[**Galashiels Academy Consultation Report Survey**](#)

Decision

1.15 The Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, including a verbal update on representations made in response to the Consultation Report, will be considered by Scottish Borders Council who will be asked to make a decision on the Proposal at the full Council Meeting on **29 June 2023**.

- 1.16 The intention is that interested parties should have time to see and digest the contents of this consultation report and have the time to make the authority aware of any final issues and opinions regarding same. No decision will be taken in regard to the proposal by the Council or the Council's (Executive Education) Committee until the full statutory consultation process has been properly completed and this includes the three week period to consider this Consultation Report collating views and opinions of all stakeholders consulted.
- 1.17 Please note that in the event that there are material considerations arising from the representations made in response to the Consultation Report, which impact on the recommendation being made to Council the report and recommendation will be withdrawn from the Council meeting.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In February 2016, the Council commenced a School Estate Review regarding the current school estate provision and what it should aspire to look like across the region. The Council undertook to engage with all stakeholders to obtain information and opinions regarding the current school estate and seek views and ideas. The five strategic principles that were adopted when reviewing the School Estate were:-
- Increased Educational opportunities for all generations in the community
 - Improved outcomes for all children and young people
 - Sustainability
 - Future proofing the school estate
 - Affordability
- 2.2 As part of the Review detailed assessments of the 2 of the 4 secondary schools that had not been replaced across the region were carried out. This included public engagement sessions. In November 2018, Councillors agreed to prioritise the replacement of Galashiels academy given the issues identified with 1) Suitability and condition of the building 2) The projected maintenance costs across the short and medium term.
- 2.3 Since then extensive work has been carried out regarding the replacement of the Academy has been undertaken to both choose a site and design the project. Following a detailed site assessment – see Proposal Report in **Appendix 1**- it is proposed that Galashiels Academy be relocated to a new campus on a site encompassing the current Academy site and part of Scott Park. The new campus proposal will also include a new enhanced provision for young people with complex additional needs, new swimming pool, new hydrotherapy pool and sports facilities open to the whole community. The proposed location was considered following an Options Appraisal Exercise. This can be found within the proposal Paper within **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 The Council considers that the new school will deliver strong educational benefits to all learners across the generations in Galashiels and the surrounding communities, whilst minimising disruption to the education of the pupils of the Academy. The proposal to relocate rather than re- build is made as it is considered essential the disruption to pupils learning is kept to a minimum during the construction phase. To rebuild on the current site would mean decanting pupils to another site (in whole or

part) and relocating of sports facilities. The Council's detailed reasoning is set out within the Proposal Paper.

- 2.5 The proposal to relocate and build on the proposed site has been endorsed by Education Scotland in their Report dated May 2023 and attached as **Appendix 2**.

PUBLIC MEETING

- 3.1 A public meeting was held on 20 April 2023 at Galashiels Academy from 18:00 until 21.30. Details of the Meeting Notes are included in **Appendix 4**. Approximately 50 members of the public attended the public meeting.
- 3.2 Lesley Munro, the Council's Director of Education & Lifelong Learning addressed the meeting. Kevin Ryalls, Head teacher of Galashiels Academy showed a fly through video of the proposed design of the new Academy and presented on the Educational opportunities of the new school. A link to the Flythrough video can be found at **Appendix 3**.
- 3.4 Notes taken of the Public Meeting detailing the questions, comments and the Council's responses are attached as **Appendix 4**.
- 3.5 At the meeting officers undertook to revert to participants at the meeting on 2 points:-
- The requirement to consult with staff regarding the interior of the school in accordance with Education Scotland guidance – *This consultation has been in relation to the proposal to relocate the school and the educational benefits that arise from the proposal. There have been numerous consultations with staff regarding the proposed plans and layouts of the proposed new school. The Council undertakes to continue discussions with staff regarding layout if the school project proposal is to progress.*
 - The ongoing examination of the Council's proposed Local Development Plan by a reporter appointed by Scottish Ministers and in particular the section regarding green space – *Planning permission for the proposed new Academy was granted on 5 September 2022. It is acknowledged that the proposed new Local Development Plan is still undergoing examination. The permission for the proposed new school, was granted under the terms of the current Local Development Plan.*

4. MEETINGS WITH PUPILS AND STAFF

Galashiels Academy

- 4.1 Officers met with the Pupil Council at Galashiels Academy on 3 May 2023. The pupils were shown a fly-through video of the new school proposal and were encouraged to express their views, ask questions and make comments. There was a very high level of engagement, with the pupils showing a clear interest in the design, the functionality and the changes that this may mean for all pupils and the environment of their school and Scott Park. Their comments, observations and questions will be fed back to the project team and senior leadership at the Academy to ensure these are considered if the project progresses. Their comments and questions are summarised below:-

- The design was considered very modern, bright, clean, modular, futuristic, and very different from the Academy. There was unanimous enthusiasm about a new school;
- There were however concerns about being distracted in class due to the glass frontage and openness of some learning areas;
- There was concern about how double learning spaces might work but there was a lot of positivity about the individual learning spaces;
- There was a lot of positivity about the social and dining space and in particular the sport facilities;
- They were positive about the toilet proposals;
- There were questions about public access to the building – how this would be managed? Assurances were given that this would be managed appropriately. Several pupils did not want the public to have the ability to look into the swimming pool or gyms when there were lessons. Blinds and other options were discussed;
- The pupils were very positive about the openness of the design and the amount of natural light. The flexibility of social and learning space was also a positive with the bleachers area being very popular;
- There was discussion about open learning spaces and pupils were concerned about being distracted but there was a consensus that they may get used to a different learning environment;
- Some were concerned about the safety of so much glass and the balcony areas, assurances were given about safety;
- Many wanted lockers and for these to be more readily accessible throughout the school;
- Several expressed sadness that Scott Park would be affected by the proposed development as it's "a good wee park". There were also concerns that the build might disrupt the residents close to the school. However the pupils were very keen to get the new school as soon as possible and see what the school and park will look like;
- There was also strong interest in what could be recycled from the old school as they were keen to minimise waste – including furniture, equipment and the steel structure from the existing school building.

Primary Schools

4.2 Meetings were also held with pupils in the affected catchment primary schools from 9 May 2023 for pupils at the cluster primary schools. Pupils were shown a fly -through video of the new school proposal and encouraged to express their views and opinions by way of Teams video calls arranged, with their class teacher/ head teacher facilitating. It was noted that there was a high level of active engagement with pupils expressing entirely positive opinions about the proposal to relocate and also asking valid and pertinent questions about the proposal for the new school build design. A summary of the comments is in the table below:-

	Pupil's Comments
Stow Primary School/ Heriot Primary School/ Fountain Hall Primary School	Light and airy, very sociable build design being proposed. Positive reaction to two canteens and café areas for eating- far better than existing provision Suggestion for sound proof room/ scream room noted for design team

	<p>Liked U- shaped science benches</p> <p>Query regarding the possibility that building would be too light- important to consider design detail re blinds/ frosted glass to negate too much light. Noted for design team</p> <p>Query regarding the platform area overlooking school atrium/ hall with comment could be uncomfortable for some pupils to be able to be observed.</p> <p>Counter argument that some pupils felt it would be positive to be able to engage and be observed. Noted all for design team to consider.</p> <p>No comments about relocation incorporating aspect of Scott Park.</p> <p>All happy with proposed location.</p>
St Peter's Primary	<p>Positive response to the new build design</p> <p>Costs question asked and responded to with information.</p> <p>Excited about fitness suite and sports facilities</p> <p>Positive about new astro and modern pitches</p> <p>Query about hydro pool and query about whether maps or design of layout will be made available to all pupils when attending.</p> <p>Discussion about high school induction</p>
Langlee Primary	<p>Positive response to build design proposal</p> <p>Questions re stairs and accessibility</p> <p>Queries regarding nature of the building proposed – open plan/ broken plan discussed</p> <p>Positive comments regarding study areas/ quiet areas</p> <p>Very spacious / light airy and bright.</p> <p>Very positive re sports and positive comments re community campus.</p>
Tweedbank Primary	<p>Futuristic design</p> <p>Impressive design proposed</p> <p>Excitement for going to high school if looked like that.</p> <p>Happy for the design to get go ahead</p>
Balmoral primary School/ Glendinning Primary School	<p>Impressive dance studio facility</p> <p>Large and spacious</p> <p>Very positive</p> <p>Questions about square meter age of the school. Noted and answered.</p> <p>Excited to go to a high school like that</p>
St Margaret's Primary / Clovenfords Primary School	<p>Query about whether swimming pool could incorporate diving boards</p> <p>Very impressive design</p> <p>Query about how long to build</p> <p>Question re safety ay Atrium/ height of handrail/ fences. Noted for design team/ H&S team to consider.</p> <p>Query about public access and discussion re thumbs access or card access to school aspect only for pupils/ permitted visitors.</p> <p>Thumbs up all round – very positive.</p>

Burgh Primary School	<p>Very impressed art/design areas Looks better than current Academy Very impressed with sports offering Money well spent Query re cost and delivery date Excitement about new pitches and swimming pool Discussion and query about plan would only be to demolish existing after new school built to limit disruption- this was felt very good thing. Important for learning to limit disruption.</p>
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Meetings with Staff

- 4.4 Staff of Galashiels Academy have been engaged through the pre consultation and consultation process. Approximately ten drop in meetings have been held with Teachers/ PT staff at Galashiels Academy since 2020 to allow Academy staff to voice their views and opinions regarding the relocation proposal and build.
- 4.5 Staff consultations have been held in conjunction with the design team within SBC and held between 1 May 2020 and 7 June 2023 to allow all staff who wished to contribute to attend. The meetings have been facilitated with the senior leadership team at Galashiels Academy. All staff (including PT and Teaching staff) were encouraged to actively participate and get involved. Meetings have been in general well attended within an average of 10-12 attendees. There have been more specific consultation meetings in addition. Education Scotland met with staff on 16 May 2023 to consult. All feedback has been taken on board. Following a meeting on 23 March 2023, sliding doors were added to top floor of the proposal design demonstrating continued willingness to work together with staff. Collaborative staff feedback is always welcomed by the Council.
- 4.6 If the decision is taken to progress with the relocation of the Academy, the Council will continue to engage with staff regarding the design throughout the build and will work closely with staff before the new school is opened.

5 REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 There were 127 responses to the online Consultation survey which was two pronged. It asked one question inviting reasoning behind the answer. The second aspect was an open invitation asking for comments or alternative suggestions regarding the relocation:-

Question 1 *“Do you agree with the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy, Galashiels? Please add any comments that you may have regarding the proposal in the box below - Please state your reasons”*

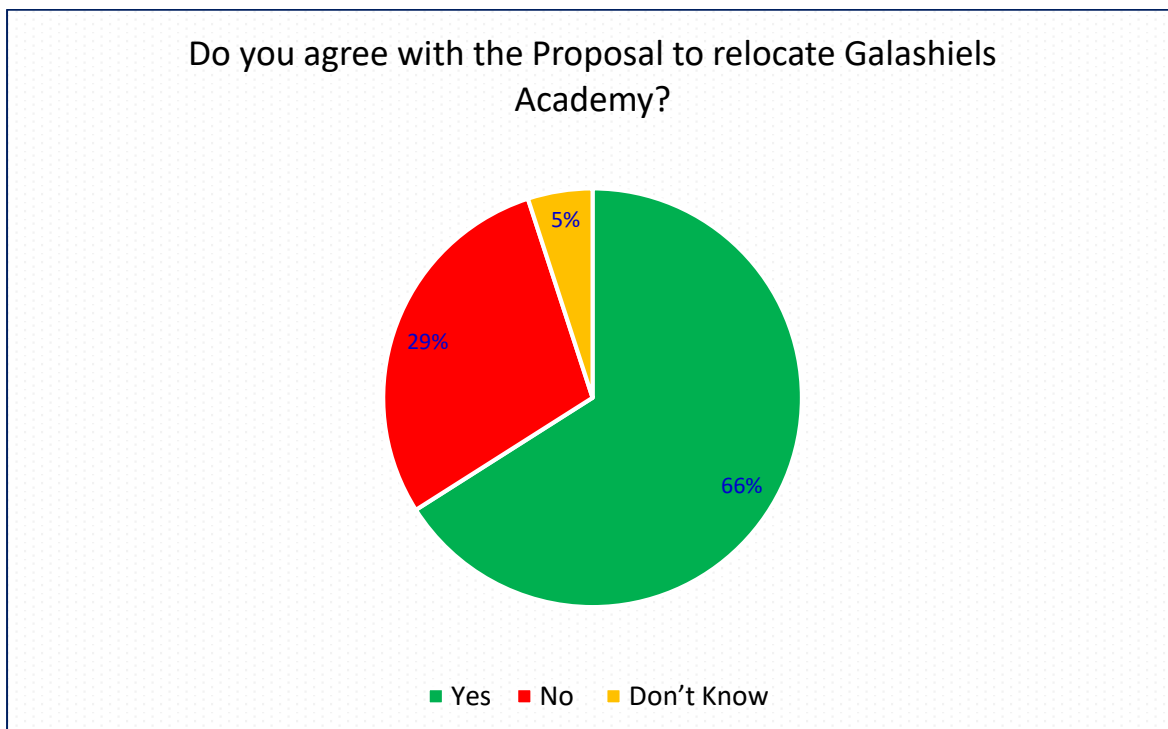
Question 2 *“Please provide us with your comments or alternative suggestions regarding the relocation of Galashiels Academy - Please provide us with any comments or alternative suggestions regarding our proposal”*

QUESTION 1

5.2 Responses to Question 1, were received from a mixture of parents, staff and members of the local community. A majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy, a minority did not agree and a small section of the respondents did not know and one respondent selected both agree and disagree to this question.

Do you agree with the Proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy?

Yes	84	66%
No	37	29%
Don't Know	6	5%
Total Responses	127	



5.3 A summary is given below of the main points contained in the responses regarding the proposal and the Council's response to concerns or questions raised. The council notes and welcomes all comments and any concerns contained in the responses regarding the proposal.

5.4 Summary of comments in favour of the Proposal:-

- The school is in desperate need of updating. Having seen and also working in new builds within SBC, I am keen for my children and the other children of Galashiels to access high quality, modern learning facilities.
- The town is growing and the needs of the pupils have changed hugely since the school was built. The building is no longer fit for purpose and it needs to stay central in the town for accessibility to all.

- A new modern school on the proposed site makes perfect sense. The park has seen many changes in use over the years. The creation of state of the arts sporting facilities can only be a benefit to the young, and old, of Gala.
- New facilities are badly needed. The site is directly in front of the current school which is a good location, sitting at the heart of Galashiels. The plans look exciting and my children are looking forward to attending.
- The School was built in 1964.
- This school is needed desperately and the site will be much improved upon.
- Totally in favour of the new school and where it's situated. Please hurry and get it built now as there have been far too many delays, I'm gutted it won't be ready sooner.
- The school needs to be replaced and the proposed location is the most practical of the options available. I trust that there will be ample public land left on the periphery of the site that the loss of the main part of Scott Park will not be a great concern.
- The construction of a new academy is long overdue and needs to be delivered ASAP. The area of park that it is proposed to be constructed on is not a massive loss and can be mitigated by making improvements to the whole area as part of the proposed development.
- No objection with a step in the right direction towards what is needed for the community of Galashiels
- It is critical for the education of our children that a new school is developed as soon as possible. We have been aware of all the discussions prior to this regarding the location and believe the proposed is the best location for the school.

5.5 **Summary of comments against the proposal:-**

- The relocation will use up a large part of the existing Scott Park which was land gifted to the people of Galashiels in the 1930's for use as a pleasure park. There is sufficient space within the grounds of the existing Galashiels Academy site to house the new campus. Scottish Borders Council could have retained the benefit of the existing park along with the new campus without causing an adverse impact to the Key Green Open Space which will be lost with the relocation.
- Loss of use of the park!
- I do not approve of a new school, because we do not need one, we need a new way of teaching, the school has never been an issue, the way our children learn is at issue, the curriculum needs to change not the school
- I agree with the proposal to relocate as it is definitely needed - however I have huge reservations about the design of the interior.
- I understand the need to replace the Academy with a new school but I don't agree that the building should be built on most of Scott Park. The park was gifted to Gala by the Scott family, it's an important green space that should've been protected for future generations but it will be lost for ever.
- I agree with the need for a new school. I do not agree with the proposed location site. The current site destroys the entirety of Scott Park. It has been proven beyond doubt that you could instead position the new school on the current rugby pitch, thereby retaining Scott Park for public use."
- I think you have taken the heart out of Galashiels for all to enjoy - it was a safe open space.
- The loss of the park space is detrimental to the town. The park is centrally located for the whole town and could be made into a destination area, especially in the summer months. Galashiels academy has ample grounds to rebuild the school on the current grounds. I also do not agree with the plans for the new building with too many void areas and low railing which provide an opportunity for people to throw items down into the spaces possibly injuring people. It is extremely disappointing to see that SBC has not learned from problems with other buildings, namely Langlee primary school, and

are continuing to use the same / similar design when it is foreseeable there will be issues.

- I have never agreed that the school should be built in the park. It is absolutely tragic that Galashiels will lose a fantastic asset just because it seems the simpler option. The other options given in the informal consultation were never really investigated properly and it is clear that the decision to build in the park was made a long time ago. I still don't really know who made that decision. Now that the heras fencing has been erected people are beginning to realise the impact the new school will have on the park. It is one thing to read a disingenuous article in a newspaper stating a small portion of the park would be used, to see the truth with your own eyes is another thing altogether. I also have concerns about the available budget. With spiralling costs there will no doubt be cut backs from the original plans. The landscaping will be the last thing to be carried out and the re-imagined inferior park will not be delivered as promised.

Council Response to Respondents re Question 1

- 5.6 The Council acknowledges, notes and welcomes all comments and queries relating to the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy.
- 5.7 The comments regarding the use of Scott Park have been considered. The use of the park was considered in detail as part of the planning process in 2022. There was an open and transparent planning process to which all stakeholders in the local community were invited to participate. A planning application for the proposed campus was approved on 5 September 2022. Plans and images relating to this are contained within the Proposal Paper contained within **Appendix 1** of this Consultation Report. A detailed Options Appraisal was undertaken in 2018 which considered four different areas of the town being Langlee, Town Centre, Scott Park, and Netherdale.
- 5.7 The Options Appraisal considered that the Town Centre and Langlee were too small to accommodate the required sports facilities along with other issues such as access from a busy road, remoteness from town centre and land ownership issues. A more detailed appraisal was undertaken on the two remaining sites and it was considered that the flooding risk at Netherdale was too significant to be considered feasible. It is recognised that during the appraisal that all areas considered would require compromise and that in some cases significant compromise for the future campus building, the pupils and community use. Not all compromises presented in the options can be mitigated against or will diminish in time. The Council therefore had to consider all three factors in identifying the site for the proposal. As was advised within the proposal Paper seen in **Appendix 1** Area 3 (which was Scott Park) was determined to be the most deliverable in terms of educational benefits, functionality, community value, construction, and cost. The council has a legal obligation to ensure best value. It is recognised and accepted that the proposal to build within an area of Scott Park, will compromise Scott Park and the amenity that this area provides the community, however the council is proposing to mitigate this by providing additional green space to the south of the proposed site to increase the range of recreational and learning opportunities provided within the park for community use. It is proposed that Scott Park will increase from 3.8 hectares to 6.7 hectares, with the park being extended to the south of the site and the improvement of the space to include open space, play space, open views and tree lined paths. The impact of the proposed development was considered in detail as part of the planning application process. The report from planning officers stated that whilst it was accepted that there would be a loss of part of Scott Park, this loss would facilitate a new education facility, community campus and modern sporting facility for the benefit of the wider community. The proposals to increase the size of the park and to make improvements were considered and it was

concluded that the benefits of the proposed development outweighed the impact of the loss of part of the park. The Council is strongly of the view that building the school at this site has the strong Educational Benefit of minimising the disruption to the current pupil cohort while the new school is built.

- 5.7 The Council is currently undertaking a detailed design process. This will seek to find the optimum design for the building and campus working with stakeholders in the community to ensure that the final design (both external and Internal) is finalised in a collaborative manner. The Council will ensure that concerns about extensive use of glass and some semi open- plan/ flexible learning spaces and issues regards health and safety of the atrium areas as addressed in respondents comments within the consultation process, will be noted as a concern and that an open and active engagement on the ongoing design process will be adhered to should The Council decide to give the proposal the go ahead to proceed.
- 5.8 The Council will undertake to alleviate and address all and any concerns and issues in relation to the design of the proposal and will undertake to use the experience of the design and hindsight benefit of the delivery of other new school building programmes in the locality, to maximise the education benefits that the new Galashiels Academy can provide. The Council Education leadership team will continue to work with Stakeholders and will engage to provide assurance that their concerns are being listened to, addressed and acted upon in terms of design decisions being made, where necessary, should the proposal be given the go ahead to proceed.
- 5.9 The Council notes the comments regarding the potential legal restrictions regarding use and development of the park. The Council has considered its title to the park and the nature of its ownership extensively. The Council is firmly of the view that it has legal title and the legal capacity to build the school as proposed. The Council has obtained a legal opinion from Legal Counsel confirming this.

QUESTION 2

- 5.10 The following is a summary of the comments received when we asked:-

Please provide us with your comments or alternative suggestions regarding the relocation of Galashiels Academy

- Building on the playing fields behind the current high school makes more sense rather than using space in the park. As drainage is an issue...fix it
- Keep the current swimming pool as/ Will the new swimming pool be an improvement on existing facilities i.e. suitable for diving, swimming competitions, changing facilities
- I'm happy for my child to go to Galashiels Academy, when that time comes.
- In the past Scott Park had trampolines and putting. But that's in the past, the town needs to progress and I think the plans are correct.
- People are worried about loss of green space. If the current school is demolished then green space can be added there.
- I don't think there is another site big enough to site the school. It is desperately needed
- This is a strange question considering the build has started and the CDT block has been torn down but there is no alternative.
- Happy with the proposal, still within the existing grounds recognised with Galashiels Academy.
- I do not agree with open classrooms. Classrooms need walls and doors to allow concentration within the classroom and prevent distraction caused outside the classroom.

- I would also like a staff room for staff to gather. This builds teamwork and gives staff a place to relax away from the classroom to regroup before the next stage of the day.
- Have young people with a visually impairment been taken into account in terms of how the building will be finished inside and out? E.g. stair marking, walls, windows being tinted as to not allow too much light in, marking on outdoor areas and well contrasted areas to ensure safety, clearly designated areas between parking and pavements, crossing points where needed.
- Has there been consideration to the wider community, particularly those with complex needs? There is a lack of buildings available in the community to meet the needs of complex needs adults for day care services. Some thought into how this building could perhaps support this gap and make those with complex needs feel more included in their community would have been appreciated.
- I do feel as though those living closest to the park who have been vocal about their displeasure of the plans haven't been taken seriously.
- It is also important that the opportunity is taken to enhance the remaining park and surrounding area to allow pupils and the local community to enjoy the make the most of surrounding nature.
- Noted that this site has been chosen to minimise disruption to learners and their ongoing education. I hope that the needs of the children have been taken into account, how they will be supported to transition into the new school, and that not all communal areas are open plan radiating noise as this would be highly distressing and impact on learning and behaviour
- I approve of the location and feel the overall design is sympathetic to the locality.
- Based on plans given, I can see potential child protection issues, e.g. having the majority of the building with glass means members of the public could see children without any PVG checks.
- The current plans suggest an open plan setting for the majority of the school, however this will not work for all subjects, noise disruption will probably lead to less engagement Potential health and safety issues with the set up and/or equipment that is being suggested to certain subjects, egg building a stage for concerts/presentations.
- Parking issues, blue badge spaces are still a distance away from the entrance. Minimal information/feedback given from architects after staff consultations. Architects do not seem to have answered the issues raised around health and safety aspects of their suggested building.
- There has been some comments regarding the inclusion of unisex or non-defined toilets. I would welcome clarification on this point, as to whether if this is the case, then will there also be defined male and female toilets in place?
- There are no alternatives in my opinion. The Scott Park is an ideal location for the school. It's barely used at present and I'm sure the odd dog walker can manage to stretch their legs a little further and walk to The Policies.
- Happy with relocation plans
- All very positive and long overdue.
- Options are extremely limited when you consider that construction must proceed simultaneously with existing school remaining open. The proposed location is fine. Let's just get on with it before my children are too old to benefit.
- Please look at pedestrian and vehicle access to and from the school. Too often consideration of this stops at the red boundary line but it is such an important issue. Scott Street is extremely busy and safe crossing facilities are required. Wider footways would be beneficial too. Will the bus turning/drop off area be big enough and will parents use it with cars? Doesn't look like it will work particularly well when combined with parked cars on the street and the inevitable inconsiderate behaviours displayed by many parents at drop off and pick up times. Start the process now for any additional parking restrictions in the vicinity.
- Add high security enclosed bike parking lockers please.

- The first comment/question: was a new build required? Were any of the mills considered to be refurbished? Some of the buildings could have been used as a 6th form college. Thus contributing to the rich history of Galashiels and the vital role it played in the textiles industry, and supporting the Tapestry Museum, The lack of addressing the climate emergency holistically is noticeable. A much more in-depth environmental survey was required. The current survey is minimal; a tick box exercise.
- The impact of the both the construction of the new academy over the years, or the impact of more pupils, staff on the other inhabitants of the Policies; deer, badgers etc. has not been considered or addressed. The overall concept of the new academy seems very short term rather the required cathedral thinking when planning for the future. It should contribute to, and enable, the environment and its current and future inhabitants for decades to come. In such a precious location the building should reflect and support it more clearly. For the students and staff, why isn't there emphasis on cycling for physical and mental health and school footprint?

Council Response to Respondents re Question 2

- 5.11 The Council acknowledges, notes and welcomes all comments and alternative suggestions relating to relocate Galashiels Academy.
- 5.12 In response to the comments regarding the location of the school, the Council would reiterate what has been said above that this site was chosen following an analysis of options, which included consideration of educational benefits, functionality, community value, construction, and cost. The Council also has a legal obligation to ensure best value. The Council has listened and responded to the concerns of the residents around Scott Park and has significant plans to enhance and improve Scott Park.
- 5.13 As stated at clause 1.13 above preliminary works have commenced at the site due programming and budgetary requirements. These works are being undertaken at risk to the Council as it is recognised that a final decision will not be made until 29 June 2023 when this report will be presented to the Councillors with a recommendation.
- 5.14 There have been many concerns expressed about the “open plan” nature of the proposed design. The school will not be ‘open plan’ but will provide a large number of traditional classrooms with additional flexible learning spaces, to allow learning to take place in different ways. The senior team at the school have been heavily involved in the design and are confident that this design will provide a fabulous environment for learning and collaboration for all pupils. The design is still evolving and Council officers will continue to work with the Academy’s staff to further develop the design. The Council will also work to ensure that the final design meets the specific needs of visually impaired children. There is a team at the Council who specialise in these requirements.
- 5.15 The issues regarding safe routes to school and the traffic implications will continue to be refined as the plans progress. This will include parking and disabled access parking. Cycling and walking to the school will be promoted and new access paths will be developed to facilitate this. Secure storage for bikes will be incorporated into the plans. The concerns regarding public access to the building are noted. Access to the school will be controlled and ways to screen the school areas from public view are being considered as some pupils have already flagged this as a concern during the consultation process. The safety and the safeguarding of our pupils is always at the forefront for the Council. Similarly all health and safety issues for the operation of the school will be carefully considered and specialist input will be a requisite.

- 5.16 The proposed new swimming pool will be an improvement on the current pool. The changing facilities and all other aspects will be improved. Options are currently being considered regarding the depth of the pool to ensure safer diving compared to the current pool that does not have a deep end.
- 5.17 There will be toilets and changing dedicated to male and female as well as toilets and changing that is all-gender/universal. Each toilet will be fully enclosed with a wash hand basin to maximise privacy.
- 5.18 The transition to the school will be carefully managed to ensure the smoothest transition for current and new pupils. Those that require it will also receive enhanced transition support. Plans will be put in place to support the young people navigate their way round the new building.
- 5.19 The comments noted regarding the environmental implications of the new build are noted. Our educational model is to have all the students accessing the new state of the art facilities at one site. The funding from the Scottish Government requires the proposed school to be sustainable. The sustainability of the school has therefore been at the forefront in respect of the design and operation of the school. The Council has also been working with advisers to ensure that as much of the old Academy can be reused and recycled, including the steel. The plans for Scott Park and the links to the Policies are being carefully planned, with careful consideration on environment. Outdoor learning will be a significant part of the curriculum at the new school.
- 5.20 The opportunities for other community members with complex needs is still being developed. The school will be a community building, with facilities available for use by all. The Council will work groups to establish the best way for the school to provide space and support for the wider community, particularly those with complex needs. The opportunities for community and lifelong learning are still being developed by the Council but it is expected that there will be significant opportunities. In addition the hydrotherapy pool will be an important addition to the town and will be available to other users.

6 EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

- 6.1 In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a copy of the Proposal document was sent to Education Scotland to consider and to prepare a report addressing the educational aspects of the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy. The report from HMIE (Education Scotland) can be found in **Appendix 2**. In addition to this it is understood that a representative of Education Scotland attended the Public Consultation meeting at Galashiels Academy on 20 April 2023.
- 6.2 Education Scotland was provided with all written responses to the Consultation both online and written and all other relevant documents with regards to the responses to the Consultation from stakeholders.
- 6.3 It is understood that Education Scotland met with relevant consultees at Galashiels Academy, Burgh Primary, Clovenfords Primary, Heriot Primary, Langlee Primary, St Margaret's RC Primary and Tweedbank Primary Schools along with Staff at Galashiels Academy.
- 6.4 HM Inspectors considered:-

- The likely effects of the proposal for young people of the school; any other users; and children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of the publication of the proposal paper
- Any other likely effects of the proposal;
- How the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effect that may arise from the proposal and
- The educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the Council's reasons for coming to its conclusions.

6.5 Education Scotland published their report on 6 June 2023 highlighting that:-

- Overall, respondents to the survey largely recognise and support the need for a new school building to replace the existing ageing campus.
- Where expressed, objections largely relate to the location of the new school on local parkland and why the school could not have been built on an alternative site.
- Other concerns raised within the survey responses relate to details regarding the design of the building, particularly aspects of the internal layout.
- In order to progress the building programme and comply with funding requirements, the Council's project board has allowed preparatory work to progress in tandem with this consultation proposal. The project board has acknowledged and accepted there is a risk attached to undertaking these works before a final decision is made regarding the new school.
- HM Inspectors agree that this is a risk.
- It was noted that in responding to the survey, a few stakeholders were confused by the timing and purpose of the Consultation as they understood that the plan to build a new school had already been agreed.
- Within the Proposal Paper, Scottish Borders Council set out a range of educational benefits including pupils with additional support needs, and for other users of the schools facilities. Benefits were to include modern learning environment, flexible design that supports a broad curriculum, more spaces for vocational learning and training in skills and that more natural daylight will support wellbeing. Enhanced sport and recreational facilities for school and community use and that the new building would be intended to offer young people with complex physical and medical needs opportunities to learn across the whole school.

6.6 HM inspectors conclusions are that:

- There are significant potential educational benefits from the proposal to relocate Galashiels adjacent to its current location.
- The new building will provide a modern, welcoming and flexible learning environment.
- The planned design (although not finished) should offer a variety of learning spaces well equipped to meet the needs of young people and be adaptable to a changing curriculum on offer.
- The enhanced sports facilities will continue to support the traditionally high levels of participation in Galashiels.
- Almost all Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors and a majority of people who responded to the council's survey, strongly support the proposal.
- The design, which is at an advanced stage, is already informed by a wide range of stakeholders, however a few stakeholders have raised concerns about some aspects of the current design.

- It will be important for the Council and the senior leadership team to continue to listen, work closely with and keep stakeholders informed should the proposal go ahead. This will support the Council to fulfil their aspirational vision for the new Galashiels Academy.

Council Response to Education Scotland Report

6.7 The Council welcomes and notes the points made within the HMIE report. The Council is in agreement with all aspects of it and will undertake to commit to maintaining a strong community “buy in” with this proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy. The Council will continue to fully cooperate with the community to keep them informed of the progress of this proposal. The Council will undertake to alleviate and address concerns in relation to the design of the build within the proposal and will undertake to use its experience of other new school building programmes in the locality, to maximise the education benefits that the new Galashiels Academy can provide. The Council’s project and Education teams will continue to work with Stakeholders and will engage to provide assurance that their concerns are being listened to, addressed and acted upon in terms of design decisions being made, where necessary, should the proposal be given the go ahead to proceed.

7. INACCURACIES IN THE PROPOSAL PAPER

There were no material inaccuracies or omissions found or notified to the Council in respect of the Proposal Paper.

8 COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY PROCESS

- 8.1 Throughout this consultation, the Council’s Education & Lifelong Learning team has given due regard to the provisions of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 8.2 The statutory consultation process was robust, with high levels of engagement from the local community, and provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to identify key issues. Any areas of concern are responded to within **Sections 4, 5 and 6**. This final consultation document seeks to present all information and ask for any further views or alternatives to the Proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy.
- 8.3 A recommendation will be made to the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2023 to make a final decision on the Proposal. The recommendation will be based on the documents and information presented in this Consultation Report and will take due cognisance of any further views or alternatives to the Proposal expressed during the consultation period regarding this Consultation Report.
- 8.4 Parties are invited to raise any concerns and pose alternative solutions by making written or electronic submissions to:-

Galashiels Academy Consultation
 Education and Lifelong Learning
 Scottish Borders Council
 Council Headquarters
 Newtown St Boswells
 Melrose
 TD6 OSA

01835 825 080 or by email to Schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk or

[Galashiels Academy Consultation Report Survey](#) or



If you wish to respond by letter or electronically, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “carer”, “relative”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the community” etc. Responses from Parent Councils, Staff and Pupil Councils are particularly welcome.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically, should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Scottish Borders Council”. Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available.

For any written or electronic response to be considered it must be received by the Council no later than 5.00pm on the last day of the consultation period **27 June 2023**.

Lesley Munro

LESLEY MUNRO

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING, SCOTTISH BORDERS
COUNCIL**

6 JUNE 2023

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSAL PAPER



EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE GALASHIELS ACADEMY



CONSULTATION PERIOD:

13 MARCH 2023 UNTIL 12 MAY 2023

PUBLIC MEETINGS :

**1830 - 2030, 20 APRIL 2023 at
GALASHIELS ACADEMY**

This Proposal Document has been prepared by Scottish Borders Council's Education & Lifelong Learning Services in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended

1 THE PROPOSAL

Scottish Borders Council (Council) is seeking your comments and suggestions regarding a proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy. It is proposed that a new education and community campus will be constructed on a site in Scott Park, Galashiels, comprising most of the current Academy site and extending into Scott Park, as indicated in the plan attached as Appendix 1.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

2.1 In February 2016 the Council commenced a School Estate Review regarding the current school estate provision and what it should aspire to look like across the region. The Council undertook to engage with all stakeholders to obtain information and opinions regarding the current school estate and to seek views and ideas in respect of the vision of the future school estate. The five strategic principles that were adopted when reviewing the school estate were:-

- Increased educational opportunities for all generations in the community;
- Improved outcomes for children and young people;
- Sustainability;
- Future proofing the school estate; and
- Affordability.

2.2 As part of the Review, detailed assessments of the 2 out of the 4 secondary schools that had not been replaced across the region were carried out. This included public engagement sessions carried out over 2 days at each of the schools. In November 2018 Councillors agreed to prioritise the replacement of Galashiels Academy, given identified issues with (1) the condition and suitability of the building and (2) the projected maintenance costs across the short and medium term. Since then extensive work regarding the replacement of the Academy has been undertaken to both choose a site and design the project. Following a detailed site assessment, it is proposed that the Academy be relocated to new campus developed on a site encompassing the current Academy site and part of Scott Park. The new Campus will also include a new Enhanced Provision facility for young people with complex additional needs, new swimming pool, new hydrotherapy pool and sports facilities open to the whole community. The proposed location was determined following an extensive Options Appraisal exercise (detailed in Section 5 – Proposal). The Council considers that the new school will deliver strong Educational Benefits to all learners across the generations in Galashiels and the surrounding communities, while minimising the disruption to the education of the pupils at the Academy.

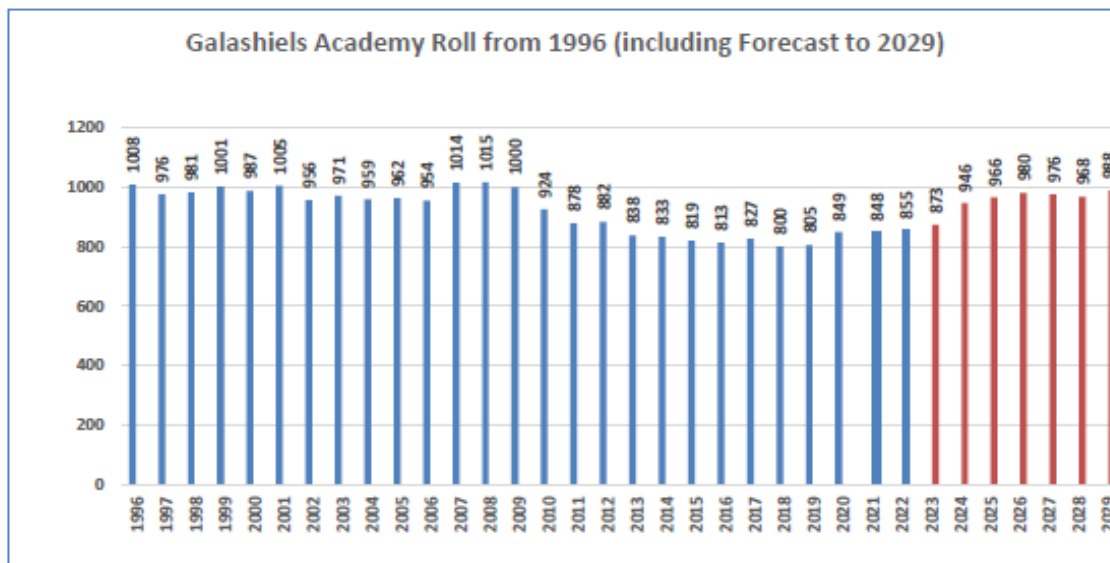
2.3 The Council is now seeking your views on the proposal to relocate the Academy to a new building designed to support the learning needs of all present and future children in the catchment. The proposal is to relocate the Academy rather than rebuild as it was considered essential that the disruption to pupils was minimised during the construction phase. To rebuild on the current site would require decanting pupils to another site (in whole or part) or the relocation of the sports facilities. Details of the options considered can be seen in Appendix 1. Responses will be collated, responded to and reflected in a Consultation Report which will be presented to Councillors before the final decision regarding the Academy's relocation is made.

3 GALASHIELS ACADEMY

- 3.1 Galashiels Academy was constructed in 1964, with the ROSLA extension being built in subsequent years.



- 3.2 The catchment area for Galashiels Academy is large, extending well beyond the town of Galashiels and comprises 11 primary schools in the town and the surrounding areas. The catchment area is shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The Academy has a capacity for 1,217 pupils. At the start of the 2022/23 school year the Academy had a roll of 873 (72% occupancy). The roll has been fairly consistent over the last decade. In 2019/20 the Academy had capacity to accommodate senior pupils from Peebles High School, following significant fire damage to the school in Peebles.
- 3.4 Current projections indicate that the roll will increase but is not currently expected to grow significantly over the next 5 year period. It is proposed that the new school building is 'future proofed', so that it can extended or adapted to accommodate roll increases. The table below provides details of the historic roll and includes the projections until 2028/29 which comprise consideration of the current housebuilding forecasts within the catchment area.



4 REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

4.1 In November 2018 Councillors determined that Galashiels Academy was to be the priority for the next stage of investment in the secondary school estate. This decision was predominantly based on detailed assessments of the condition and suitability of the Academy.

4.1.1 CONDITION

Council surveyors carried out a detailed assessment of the condition of the Academy in accordance with Scottish Government guidance. The guidance details how condition should be assessed and stipulates the weighting that should be applied to each element to give an overall score.

Condition - an assessment of the physical condition of the school and its grounds.

A: Good	Performing well and operating effectively (physical elements carry out function as new)
B: Satisfactory	Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration (physical elements carry out function satisfactorily, may show signs of age)
C: Poor	Showing major defect and/or not operating adequately (physical element does not carry out function effectively without continuous repair, show signs of age)
D: Bad	Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure

While condition varies widely across the Academy, with some elements assessed as D, the overall condition was assessed as:-

C: Poor – Showing major problems and/or not operating adequately

4.1.2 SUITABILITY

A detailed assessment of the suitability of the Academy was carried out in 2018 by Turner and Townsend, in accordance with Scottish Government guidance. This guidance details how suitability should be assessed and stipulates the weighting that should be applied to each element to give overall scores.

Suitability - an assessment of the school as a whole, its buildings and its grounds and of the impact these have on learning and teaching, leisure and social activities and the health and well-being of all users.

A: Good	Performing well and operating efficiently (the school buildings and grounds support the delivery of services to children and communities)
B: Satisfactory	Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities)
C: Poor	Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (the school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)
D: Bad	Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities (the school building and grounds seriously impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)

Turner and Townsend have determined that the Academy's Suitability rating is:-

C: Poor – Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally

- 4.2 In March 2018, 2 days of consultation were carried out at Galashiels Academy, seeking views and opinions regarding a replacement school or campus. The event was well attended across the community, with considerable engagement from pupils who put a great deal of effort into capturing the views of their fellow pupils about the current learning opportunities and experiences, as well as what they would like to see in the future. Views and opinions were collated both at the events and on-line. In summary:-

Pupil's Views

- The pupils were very positive about their learning and in particular about the teachers.
- The pupils considered the facilities were inadequate. Concerns were raised about:-
 - The road crossing the site
 - The separate building for some lessons
 - The PE facilities, in particular the roof, the changing rooms and the temperature
 - The general disrepair and condition of the building, which is not eco friendly
 - The lack of investment in the school building

- Accessibility issues
 - Inadequate IT
 - The size of the canteen which was considered too small and not suitable
 - The toilets
 - Lack of study and meeting space
 - Lack of community access
 - The lack of social space
 - Limited access to the library
 - The lack of drama space
 - No dance studio
- The pupils were very keen to have a new school, with facilities that were as good as other schools in the Borders. The pupils repeatedly expressed that they wanted a school that they could be proud of. They also mentioned:
 - WiFi, smart boards and screens
 - State of the art sports facilities including a fitness suite which can be accessed outwith school with inclusive changing facilities (including mirrors and hairdryers), lockers, including basketball court, MUGA, skate park, bike track, climbing wall, parkour areas and flood lit pitches
 - Better provision for pupils with additional support needs
 - Single site and fully accessible
 - Eco friendly and sustainable
 - Bigger canteen and picnic benches
 - Swimming pool
 - Social space and quiet rooms
 - Better toilets which should be accessible and inclusive
 - Flexible learning space
 - Place for meetings and study areas
 - Improved access for printing
 - Considerably wider opportunities for work experience
 - Opportunity to develop life skills and help community
 - Wider curriculum choices
 - Greater inclusion and diversity
 - More links with the community and community use
 - Improved physical links to the town
 - More music tuition and more instruments, practice and preparation space, gallery space, dance studio, pottery
 - Better lighting and sound equipment

The majority of pupils that responded to the on-line questionnaire expressed a preference for the new school to be at the existing location, which they considered attractive, centrally located with good access points. A small number of the pupils suggested the new school should be constructed adjacent to the existing school to ensure there was minimum disruption to their learning, with some suggesting that the school was built further back into the Policies or onto Scott Park. Some also suggested that they would prefer a site closer to the town centre.

The main point from the pupils' comments was that the teachers work very hard to use the facilities that they have and do a great job but the facilities are inadequate. This can be summarised in this comment from a pupil:

“Think of how we would flourish with better facilities”

Parents and the Community's Views

Almost all the members of the community and parents expressed their wish for a new school. The majority expressed their disappointment regarding the lack of investment in the school. Many commented that there had been little change since their school days. Views were expressed that it was Galashiels' turn as it had been mentioned for years that there would be a new school and Galashiels had slipped down the list.

The school was described as a depressing environment, which did little to inspire the pupils and in general the view was the teachers and pupils were performing well, despite the facilities. Many respondents considered that outside opportunities should be maximised and that the new school should be equipped to support and enhance innovation in learning and provide employment experience for young people.

The general consensus amongst parents and the community was that a new school should be at the same location as the existing school which is:

- Central to the town and close enough for community access
- A large enough space to accommodate other facilities
- Well located for access and transport links
- An attractive location which would provide an attractive learning environment
- Able to provide outdoor opportunities.

Some respondents stated that the locations of Tweedbank, Netherdale or Kingsknowe should be considered. In summary there was strong support expressed across almost all participants in the sessions for a new learning provision in the town and the message was get on with it as soon as possible.

4.3 Since November 2018, a project team has been progressing a strategy for the replacement of the Academy, taking into account the opinions expressed during the consultations. The Academy staff have also been involved in the design process at all stages. This process has included ensuring that the proposal for a new school building:

- 4.3.1 Is a well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environment for all the community that will drive new thinking and change;
- 4.3.2 Is an integral part of the community it serves;
- 4.3.3 Accommodates and provides a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to health and wellbeing and will sustain economic growth and bring strength and vibrancy to communities;
- 4.3.4 Is sustainable with design, construction and operation that it environmentally and energy efficient;
- 4.3.5 Is efficiently run and delivers value for money; and

- 4.3.6 Is flexible and responsive to changes in demand for school places and evolved in consultation with learners, staff and parents and the community.
- 4.4 As transformation of the secondary school estate requires significant financial support from the Scottish Government, Council Officers have worked with the Scottish Government to secure funding for the replacement for the Academy. The Scottish Government approve projects on an annual basis. Confirmation has now been received from the Scottish Government that they will provide a significant portion of funding for an acceptable scheme at Galashiels. It has therefore been decided to consult with the pupils, staff, parents and community of the Galashiels' cluster to obtain their comments and views on the proposals prior to the final decision regarding the new educational campus being made.

5 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 A detailed design has been created for the new campus which will create an education and community facility which is both flexible and can be accessed and utilised by all, all year round. The new state of art secondary setting will have capacity for 1,000 pupils. A new specialist facility for children with Additional Support Needs will be created, with a hydrotherapy pool which will provide a transformational learning environment. If the decision is made to proceed with the new campus it is expected that work will commence in 2023; with the campus opening in 2025.
- 5.2 A planning application for the proposed campus was approved on 5 September 2022¹. Plans and images from the application are contained in **Appendix 1**. The application details a campus that will create a new learning space where everyone in the community can learn, participate and keep healthy. The campus will incorporate flexible pupil focused learning spaces in a mix of formats. Core learning, sport leisure and community environments will be supported and connected by areas of collaboration, breakout, social and learning. The format of the connected spaces also reflects the move towards a greater emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (**STEM**) whereby different subject groupings can work collaboratively in a shared environment creating an atmosphere of creative, cross and peer to peer learning. There will also be dedicated spaces for Art and Design, Music, Drama, Technology/Engineering, Food Technology and Science. Central dining, meeting and assembly spaces will provide a social and community heart to the campus.
- 5.3 The internal sports facilities will include a 4 court games hall, a 2 court games hall, a gymnasium, dance studio, fitness studio, and associated changing facilities. There will also be a 6 lane 25m pool with spectator seating. External sports facilities will include a 3G football/rugby pitch, Gen-2 hockey/netball surface, grass football pitch including 200m athletic oval, 100m athletics sprint track, long jump pit, and new covered tennis courts. The external sports facilities will all be lit which will allow them to be used in the evening all year round. The design also provides for external learning, play and social spaces.

6 IMPACT AND PROPOSALS - SCOTT PARK

- 6.1 A number of sites across Galashiels were considered for the location of a new school. An Options Appraisal was undertaken in 2018, which considered 4 different areas of the town:-
- Langlee
 - Town Centre

¹ [Planning Application and Approval](#)

- Scott Park
- Netherdale.

6.2 The Options Appraisal process determined that Langlee and the Town Centre site were too small to accommodate all the sports facilities that the school would require, along with other issues including access from a busy road, remoteness from Centre and land ownership issues. A more detailed appraisal was undertaken of the 2 remaining sites which concluded that the flooding risk at Netherdale was too significant to be considered.

6.3 While assessing the potential locations for the school, the project team carried out a detailed analysis of the current school site and its surrounding area. 5 separate locations were considered in detail as indicated in the plan below:-

Scott Park Site Options Appraisal

As part of the options appraisal all areas within the red line boundary shown on the plan/map were considered. Investigated and tested as possible locations for the new building.

Area 1
The site of the existing playing fields to the rear (west) of the existing school.

Area 2
The site of the existing tennis courts to the north of the existing school.

Area 3
Scott Park, to the east of the existing school.

Area 4
The site of the existing annex building along the south elevation of the site.

Area 5
The site of the existing main school building.



6.4 A detailed Options Appraisal has been completed regarding each of these areas. The outcome of this Appraisal is detailed in Appendix 3.

6.4 It was recognised during the Appraisal that all Areas considered in this process would require compromise, and in some cases a significant compromise for the future campus building, the pupils and community use. Not all the compromises presented in the options can be mitigated against or will diminish in time. The Council has therefore considered all these factors in identifying the site for this Proposal. Having assessed and tested all of the options Area 3 – Scott Park (see Appendix 1) is considered to be the most deliverable in terms of educational benefits, functionality, community value, construction and cost (Council has a legal obligation to ensure best value).

6.5 It is recognised that the proposal to build the campus in Area 3, will compromise Scott Park and the amenity that this area provides the community, however, the Council is proposing to mitigate

this by providing additional green space to the south of the proposed site to increase the range of recreational and learning opportunities provided within the Park for community use. It is proposed that Scott Park will be increased from 3.8 hectares to 6.7 hectares, with the Park being extended to the south of the site and the improvement of the space, to include open space, play space, open views and tree lined paths.

- 6.6 The impact of the proposed development was considered in detail as part of the Planning Application. The report from the Planning Officers stated that while it was accepted that there would be a loss of part of Scott Park, that this loss would facilitate a new education facility, community campus and modern sporting facility for the benefit of the wider community. The proposals to increase the size of the park and make improvements were considered and it was concluded that the benefits of the proposed development outweighed the impact of the loss of part of the park.
- 6.7 Before a final decision is made to relocate the school, the Council is required to undertake a statutory consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This proposal is a relevant proposal in terms of this legislation.² This legislation requires local authorities to undertake strong, accountable consultation in connection with all proposals to make a major, permanent changes to a school. The principal driver for any such change should be the Educational Benefits that the change will bring. This consultation process is a crucial part of the Council's decision making process. It should be noted, that in order to progress the building programme and comply with funding requirements, the decision has been taken by the Council's project board to allow preparatory work to progress in tandem with this consultation process. The project board has acknowledged and accepted that there is risk attached to undertaking these works before a final decision is made regarding the Academy, but has balanced this against the budgetary and programme pressures of delivering a new school if the decision is made to proceed with the new school.

7 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

- 7.1 Educational benefits are at the heart of every proposal regarding major changes to a school. The relocation of the Academy and development of a new school offers the opportunity for the whole community to reflect on its vision, values and aims. A transition to a modern learning environment provides the whole community of learners the chance to re-set how high quality learning, teaching and curriculum is delivered. This extends beyond the school, encompassing adult learners and its approaches to community engagement and involvement. The new enhanced learning environment for the children with additional support needs opens up new and exciting opportunities for the whole catchment area to benefit from the investment.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR PUPILS IN THE CATCHMENT

- 7.2 The design of the proposed campus seeks to create a transformational learning environment, which is flexible and seeks to support teachers in the delivery of a dynamic curriculum that will prioritise pupil's core skills in literacy and numeracy but also assist in the development of the young people's essential interpersonal social skills, self-confidence and knowledge. The design seeks to ensure that the needs of all learners are considered. The delivery of an excellent learning environment will ensure that the facilities exist to deliver a curriculum that increases subject choice ensuring that learners can choose subjects that reflect their ability, aptitude and interests.

² [Schools \(Consultation\)\(Scotland\) Act 2010 s2](#) and [Schedule 1](#)

- 7.3 The Curriculum for Excellence introduced new ways of learning, seeking to allow the curriculum to adapt to the particular needs of individual pupils and requires subject breadth and depth in an excellent learning environment. The proposed design creates classroom clusters along with flexible learning spaces, with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Maths) and Creative Hubs which will relate to learning levels and will allow pupils to experience a range of subjects and environments more easily. The flexibility in the design will also ensure that the facilities meet the current and future demands of pupils and wider community.
- 7.4 The Academy is one of only 3 schools in Scotland to be recognised as an SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) Gold Ambassador School for their inspiring work on their curriculum. The SCQF have recognised the extensive work that has been undertaken by the school to broaden the curricular offered to pupils; developing pupil leadership, more flexible and innovative learner pathways and partnerships with local employers, universities and colleges, providing a significant range of senior phase pathways to ensure that the young people are equipped with the skills and qualifications to move onto the pathway that best suits their talents and ambitions.
- 7.5 The new building will inspire, motivate and encourage a wide range of learning and teaching approaches and learning spaces in to help take curricular development to the next level. The opportunities for staff collaboration will be greatly increased, with lessons comprising different subjects and disciplines. It will support innovation, creativity and the development of children and young people's skills for life-long learning and work by having a creative environment and access to vocational learning. The staff at the Academy have worked closely with the architects to achieve a design that will facilitate curricular development and the learning environment to support the young people in their aspirations and achievements.
- 7.6 The new school will allow an even more innovative broader curriculum to be introduced, with pupils sharing wider more varied learning experiences than currently possible. The national curriculum in Scotland is dynamic and undergoing a period of transformational change and this new school allows the community to adapt to and indeed continue to lead curricular developments in the country. The experiences young people should have at school are best undertaken in a learning environment where opportunities exist for co-operative, investigative and experiential learning. Those opportunities have been a priority within the design of the building to allow pupils enhanced opportunities within a modern learning environment to achieve the outcomes required to move onto their chosen career.
- 7.7 This curricular development will include increased opportunities for vocational learning and training in skills. The existing partnership with employers, businesses, colleges and universities will be further developed to deliver a lifelong learning commitment as the campus will look at supporting families and adult learners, identifying the skills and qualifications that are required in the workplace to meet the demands of employers.
- 7.8 The design optimises the internal and external learning experience, optimising natural daylight and ventilation with new social and nurturing spaces included, which will greatly enhance the pupils learning environment and well-being. There will be an emphasis on promoting healthy learning and lifestyle with new technologies incorporated maximising opportunities for sustainability and wider opportunities for learners regarding their environment.
- 7.9 The safety of children and young learners is paramount in the proposed design, with access to areas limited to pupils and staff only as appropriate. Pupil movement and circulation pathways will be designed to minimise congestion and disruption. Consideration will also be given to the acoustics, sensory needs and the optimised utilisation of the building.

- 7.10 A Department for Work and Pensions Report in 2022 stated that 27% of the children in the Galashiels and Ward District are living in low income families. Successful models emerging in the more deprived areas of the Borders highlight strong home /school links; high quality literacy teaching, and support around the family as key drivers in closing the attainment gap. One of the key success measures in 'closing the gap' is high quality staff with inclusive mind-sets. The new campus will help to attract and retain the best staff and student teachers who would become a high quality learning community with the expectation that they would become a leading workforce delivering the highest quality of education and community learning experiences.
- 7.11 The campus will provide an improved, innovative, learning environment, with facilities and resources designed to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence to support the learning and development needs for current and future learners. State of the art learning resources across the school will be shared by all learners to optimise each learner's journey.
- 7.12 There will also be enhanced provision for children and young people's personal, social and emotional health and wellbeing through improved social areas, sporting facilities and opportunities to learn and develop in a variety of settings.
- 7.13 The development of skills for life, learning and work will be further increased with a continued focus on vocational and technological pathways without reducing emphasis on academic achievement. The curriculum will seek to be a more relevant, challenging and enjoyable learning experience which is more clearly focused on a positive destination for all young people. Opportunities have been identified and will be expanded regarding construction, textiles, and the green economy. If the decision is made to progress with the new school there will be significant opportunities with the construction company for work experience, accreditation and guaranteed interviews for pupils undertaking the appropriate accreditation.
- 7.14 The new campus will offer enhanced sporting and recreational opportunities and experience for the young people and the wider community to meet the aspirations of both the Council and the Scottish Government to enhance the uptake and enjoyment of physical activity across the Community.
- 7.15 Dining and social areas will improve significantly from the current arrangements. This along with new external areas will create flexible space to encourage young people to socialise and engage which should improve health and well-being, while enhancing the existing strong sense of community already within the current school.
- 7.16 The Campus will provide opportunities for young people to develop skills for life, learning and work. Links will be strengthened with Economic Development to consider how industry and enterprise could be brought into the campus from existing local opportunities and new partners. South of Scotland Enterprise and the Borders Skills Partnership could work to bring investment and employment into the Campus whilst developing the necessary skills to support the jobs that are available in the young workforce.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

- 7.17 The new build will provide world-class facilities for young people with a range of additional support needs. The building will be designed to provide a curricular offer that ensures those young people with complex physical and medical needs are able to learn across the whole school not just in their dedicated base. This will open up the curriculum offered for these young people particularly in specialist subjects. In addition, young people with social, emotional and

behavioural issues will have access to a wider range of appropriate learning and support opportunities in a building that has been designed to ensure that their needs are met across the whole school as well as in a dedicated support base.

- 7.18 The new Campus will be fully accessible to people with mobility difficulties and those with additional support needs. The Campus will also allow the opportunity for those pupils to form wider relationships with peers and the Community.
- 7.19 The development of an inclusive approach to meeting the needs of young people with a range of additional support needs will be at the heart of the new school. Dedicated space and a fully inclusive learning environment will enhance the opportunities available to this group of learners. Young people with emotional needs will benefit from the opportunity to work in a nurturing school environment.
- 7.20 Opening up specialist subject areas including the development of a pool, hydrotherapy pool, sports and practical subjects not only offers new learning environments and opportunities for pupils but also delivers the same benefits for adults across the area. The new campus will also include a room visiting therapists and medical professionals to have appointments and meetings with the young people and their family.
- 7.21 The new campus will offer pupils an enhanced environment for learning with opportunities for outdoor education, new and improved additional resources and areas for life skills development. The pupils will benefit from the opportunities within the campus to develop through work experience and Community involvement. The Council also recognises that the additional support needs learning journey should continue into work or to further skills and learning opportunities. The Council will work in collaboration with local employers and Borders College to help meet this requirement. The pupils will further develop their skills for learning, life and work in local real life contexts in collaboration with the local Community.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR OTHER USERS OF THE ACADEMY'S FACILITIES

- 7.22 The Academy is currently used by many organisations and members of the community with a wide and varied programme each evening and at weekends. The proposed new campus has been designed to ensure that all these activities and more can be accommodated within the campus. The campus will be available for all learners within the area and the new improved sports facilities will be more widely available to all users. This will increase opportunities for participation and contribute and promote health and wellbeing to all.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR FUTURE PUPILS

- 7.23 The benefits listed above will also apply to those within the catchment schools that will become pupils at the campus. All the pupils that will attend the campus will benefit from the opportunities offered by the new flexible state of the art of design that can evolve to accommodate curricular developments and innovations in learning. As part of this statutory consultation process, the Education team will also ensure that all the pupils, parents/carers attending all the catchment schools are fully informed and consulted with to ensure that their views form part of the consultation and decision making process and will be fully considered.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR PUPILS AT OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE AUTHORITY AREA

- 7.24 While the main benefits of the proposed new school will be for the children and young people in the catchment, there will be wider benefits to all children in the Scottish Borders who will also be able to access the facility. Currently pupils from the Academy collaborate and learn with pupils from Selkirk and Peebles. The curricular development that will be possible at the new campus will also provide increased opportunities to other young people within the Borders. This will also be facilitated through the Council's Inspire Learning programme where digital technology will allow more young people to access new curricular opportunities. Given the established wider collaboration among staff in the region will also the innovation and curricular developments from the campus to be shared and expanded into other secondary settings in the area.

IMPACT ON STAFF

- 7.25 Staff development is a key component to delivering high quality learning and teaching. The campus will provide even more opportunities for staff to work together and collaborate, with space to develop their own personal learning and to make further improvements to the curricular offer. The design of the campus will support this more collaborative approach between teachers, subjects and departments, with the curriculum structured to allow cross collaboration between subjects and skillsets. This will support staff to build on the significant achievements already recognised by the SCQF regarding the innovative curricular developments.
- 7.26 The opportunities offered at the new campus regarding the increased opportunities to be more innovative with curriculum and learning journey should prove attractive to staff and assist with staff attraction and retention. The working environment will be inspirational and enhanced with staff having access to onsite facilities including fitness facilities.

IMPACT ON TRANSPORT – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

- 7.27 The changes to the current transport arrangements will be minimal as it is proposed that the school is relocated within the same area. Care has been taken during the design process to ensure that pedestrian access to the campus is clear and improved, Safe Routes to School are identified for pedestrian and vehicular access will be amended to ensure that the current access road will not be used for general access with the new parking area being situated on the site of the current swimming pool.

LIKELY EFFECT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- 7.28 The new campus is expected to have a significant impact on the community in Galashiels and beyond. The facilities within the campus will be available for sporting and recreational use by the larger communities, both individuals and groups. The campus will provide further opportunities to develop adult learning opportunities in partnership with Further and Higher Education providers. The school's facilities will be available for use by local clubs and organisations providing real community partnership opportunities. This could include Horticulture, Eco projects, textiles, local history all in partnership with local people. In addition the Hydrotherapy Pool will be available for other users.
- 7.29 The campus will provide a focal point for Community engagement and collaboration to harness the potential within the town and surrounding communities to deliver equitable and outstanding education provision.

- 7.30 The campus will also include facilities for the whole community – both recreation and social. The swimming pool, gym, tennis courts and sports facilities will be a significant improvement on the current provision and available to all. In particular the lighting of the external sports facilities will result in more use, increasing health and well-being across the community. Space will be available to individuals and groups within the community for events and meetings.

GALASHIELS ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL VIEW

- 7.31 The Parent Council have stated their overwhelming support for the new school development and consider that it is critical for their children and all future children that the development proceeds. They consider that the benefits will not only be for the students but for the community as well. They consider that the new development will:-

- 7.31.1 Enhance the teaching provision for all students and staff;
- 7.31.2 Create a centre of excellence where students enjoy attending and want to learn;
- 7.31.3 Provide first rate sports facilities for the students, the community and wider Eildon population;
- 7.31.4 The proposed new walkway around the campus and park would attract more use from a wider range of people;
- 7.31.5 Learning would be expanded with the first rate facilities, including sciences, music and drama;
- 7.31.6 Unlike other new schools this will be in the heart of the community not on the outskirts of the town, allowing everyone to benefit.

8. SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL PAPER

- 8.1 This Proposal Paper has been prepared by the Education & Lifelong Learning, in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended (2010 Act). The 2010 Act sets out a consultation procedure that a Local Authority must follow for certain proposals affecting schools in their area. The 2010 Act and its explanatory notes are available for reference at the following websites, respectively:

[Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#)

[Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010 - Explanatory Notes](#)

- 8.2 The proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy is deemed a relevant proposal in terms of the 2010 Act (Proposal) and is therefore subject to the statutory consultation procedure specified in the 2010 Act.

- 8.3 The Council has created an online survey at Citizenspace where you can access all the details of the Proposal and leave your comments and ask questions. This can be found at:-

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/children-and-young-people/galaacampus>

or



8.4 The Proposal Paper will be available for inspection, free of charge, at:

- Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose,
- Galashiels Academy
- Balmoral Primary School
- Burgh Primary School
- Glendinning Terrace Primary School
- Langlee Primary School
- St Margaret's RC Primary School
- St Peter's Primary School
- Clovenfords Primary School
- Fountainhall Primary School
- Heriot Primary School
- Stow Primary School
- Tweedbank Primary School
- Galashiels Library

And published on the Scottish Borders Council website:

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/children-and-young-people/galaacampus>

8.4 Copies of this Proposal Paper are available in English (and other languages upon request) from:

Education and Lifelong Learning
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells
Melrose
TD6 0SA

Telephone: 01835 825080

E-mail: schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

8.5 Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- the parents/carers of the children who attend an affected school;
- the Parent Council of an affected school;
- the parent/carers of any children likely to attend an affected school within two years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Paper;
- the pupils attending an affected school;
- the Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at an affected school;
- any Trade Union which is representative of the staff;
- Community Councils;
- the community planning partnership (as defined in section 4(5) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) for the area where an affected school is situated or any other community planning partnership that the Education Authority considers relevant;
- the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament;
- the constituency Member of Parliament;
- the List Members of the Scottish Parliament.

8.6 Advertisement in Local Media

Advertisements were placed in the relevant local media the week beginning 6 March 2023 giving the dates for the consultation period and for the public meeting. Press releases were made on and around, advertising the consultation in the local press and social media.

8.7 Consultation Period

The consultation for these Proposals will run from 13 March 2023 and will end on 12 May 2023. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

8.8 Public Meetings

A public meeting will be held at Galashiels Academy on 20 April 2023 from 1830 until 2030.

Format of Public Meeting

Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting, which will be convened by Scottish Borders Council, will be addressed by officers from Education & Lifelong Learning, Infrastructure & Environment and other relevant officers.

The meetings will provide an opportunity to:

- Hear more about the Proposal
- Ask questions about the Proposal
- Have your views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

A note will be taken at the meeting of comments, questions and officer responses. These notes will be published on the Council's website and a copy will be made available on request. These notes will be forwarded to Education Scotland, along with other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process.

9 HAVE YOUR SAY – HOW YOU CAN RESPOND TO THE PROPOSALS

- 9.1 A consultation regarding a proposed change to your child's or your community's school is your chance to share your views. Your responses can really shape and influence future decisions; you can play your part by:
- Submitting a written or electronic response to the Council as outlined below;
 - Attending the meeting to ask questions; raise concerns/issues; make suggestions to be held on :-
20 April 2023 at Galashiels Academy from 1830-2030.
 - Speaking to your local Councillors;
 - Engaging with your school's Parent Council. The Parent Council can play a key role in engaging with the Council throughout the process;
 - Make representations as part of your Community;
 - Informing Scottish Borders Council if you think that this Proposal Paper has significant inaccuracies or omissions.
- 9.2. All interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposal by making written or electronic submissions to:
- Galashiels Academy Consultation
Education & Lifelong Learning
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells
Melrose
TD6 0SA
Or
- schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk
- 9.3 A response form is available from Children & Young People's Services, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA or online at. A copy of the response form is attached as **Appendix 4**.
- 9.4 Use of the response form is not compulsory. If you wish to respond by letter or electronically, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, "pupil", "parent", "carer", "relative", "former pupil", "teacher in school", "member of the community" etc. Responses from Parent Councils, staff and Pupil Councils are particularly welcome.
- 9.5 Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically, should note that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: "I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Scottish Borders Council". Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available.
- 9.6 Any information that you provide will be processed by Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA. You can contact the Council on 0300 100 1800 or customerservices@scotborders.gov.uk. The Council's Data Protection Officer can be

contacted using the contact details for the Council as set out above or by email at dataprotection@scotborders.gov.uk We will use your information to assess the reaction within the community to our proposal. The Council is collecting and using this information to keep respondents up to date with the progress of the proposal. The information you have provided will be retained 6 months

- 9.7 All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, **12 May 2023**
- 9.8 Education Scotland has prepared guidance regarding School Consultations. This can be accessed at [Education Scotland's Guidance on School Consultations](#).

10. INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATION SCOTLAND

A copy of this Proposal document will be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Council at the public meeting that will be held and, as available (and so far as otherwise practicable), a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 3 weeks after the Council has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. In some cases, it is possible for them to extend the 3 weeks with the agreement of the Authority. However, for the avoidance of doubt, the 3 week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may enter the affected school(s) and make such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

11 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 11.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment must be completed to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. The aim of the Assessment is to examine policies and practice in a structures way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 11.2 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a range of stakeholders, including children, parents/carers, staff and the wider community and will address all the comments made during this process, some of which may include equality issues. The Integrated Impact Assessment will be finalised and referred to in the Consultation Report.

12. PREPARATION OF CONSULTATION REPORT

- 12.1 The Council will review the Proposal having regard to the Education Scotland report, the written representations that it has received, and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report.
- 12.2 This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council website and from Council Headquarters, the public

library in Galashiels, as well as Galashiels Academy and all the cluster primary schools, free of charge. Anyone who made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, and a summary of the written representations and oral representations (including those made at the public meeting). The report will also include the Council's response to the Education Scotland Report, as well as the Council's response to any written or oral representations it has received. A copy of the Education Scotland Report will be included alongside any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled.

- 12.3 The Consultation Report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of three weeks, before it is presented to Full Council at the next scheduled Council meeting.
- 12.4 **NO** decision will be taken in regard to the Proposal by either the Council or the Council's Executive (Education) Committee until this statutory consultation process has been properly completed. It should be noted, that in order to progress the building programme and comply with funding requirements, the decision has been taken by the Council's project board to allow preparatory work to progress in tandem with this consultation process. The project board has acknowledged and accepted that there is risk attached to undertaking these works before a final decision is made regarding the Academy, but has balanced this against the budgetary and programme pressures of delivering a new school if the decision is made to proceed with the new school.

13 NOTE ON CORRECTIONS

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal Paper, either by Scottish Borders Council or any person, Scottish Borders Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy. It will then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the re-issuing of the Proposal Paper, or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised.

LESLEY MUNRO
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

13 MARCH 2023

This consultation is being conducted in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. The 2010 Act's principal purpose is to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other changes to schools. These consultation processes are expected to be robust, open, transparent and fair, and seen to be so. They are also expected to be consistent across Scotland.

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED SITE FOR RELOCATION OF GALASHIELS ACADEMY







02/20/2018

Project Name:		Architect:	Jacob Beck
Client:		Location:	USA
Project Type:		Year:	2018
Scale:		Phase:	Concept
Team Lead:		Collaborator:	
Project Manager:		Website:	
Architect:	Jacob Beck	Contact:	
Address:		Phone:	
City:		Email:	
State:		Website:	
Country:			

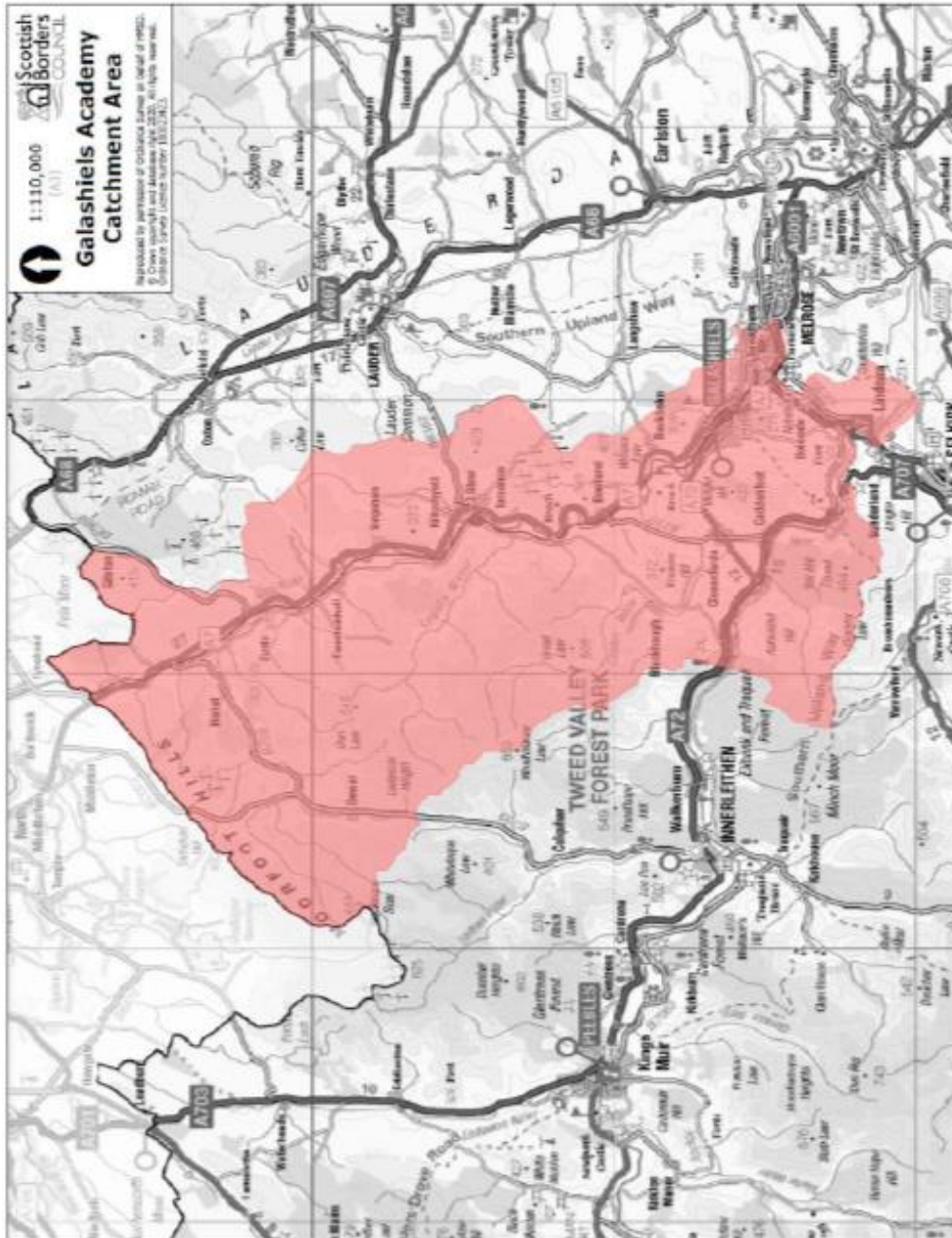


02/20/2018

Project Name:		Architect:	Jacob Beck
Client:		Location:	USA
Project Type:		Year:	2018
Scale:		Phase:	Concept
Team Lead:		Collaborator:	
Project Manager:		Website:	
Architect:	Jacob Beck	Contact:	
Address:		Phone:	
City:		Email:	
State:		Website:	
Country:			

APPENDIX 2

CATCHMENT AREA OF GALASHIELS ACADEMY



APPENDIX 3

OPTIONS APPRAISAL OF SITES IN SCOTT PARK



Site Appraisal : Area 1

- ✓ Can facilitate construction of the new campus whilst the existing buildings remains fully operational.
- The new campus would not encroach on Scott Park, albeit the required campus sports provision (pitches) would.
- Campus car parking is provided on site and existing site access points are retained.
- Can work with the existing topography and relatively contained impact on the existing trees.
- Maintains a good distance between surrounding residential properties and the new campus.
- Tennis court facilities reprovided on site of Annesse building
- ✗ The new campus would be detached from the town and local community.
- The approach to the new campus from the town would be obscured by fenced sports pitches - diluting its civic presence and approachability.
- The distance from the town and the protracted, unwelcoming approach may risk reducing community use and out of hours usage.
- The daylighting afforded to the building will be compromised by overshadowing from surrounding woodland.
- The new building will be partially constructed on a flood risk zone associated with an adjacent watercourse.
- Loss of existing external sports provision during the construction phase.
- Construction traffic would use the full extent of the existing school access road, passing very close to a live school environment.
- Grass sports pitch provision required to be constructed on part of Scott Park

Site Appraisal : Area 2



- ✓ The new campus would only marginally encroach onto Scott Park and the school's sports provision can be contained entirely within the site boundary.
- The campus would have strong links to the town and the local community.
- The new campus would generate a strong civic presence and frontage in its completed format.
- Car parking can be facilitated offsite but nearby.
- Minimal new footpath networks required.
- New campus would have good south facing aspect.
- Maintains a reasonable distance between surrounding residential properties and the new campus.
- ✗ The new campus would be located on a very constrained area of the site.
- Partial demolition of the existing school building would be required to facilitate construction.
- There would be significant impact on the operation of the school during construction.
- The construction site would be very close to the new ASN provision and would most likely require the most vulnerable part of the school's population to be decanted for the duration of the works.
- The daylighting of the accommodation on the north side of the building would be compromised by the close proximity to the Gala Poles.
- Some tree removal both within and outwith the site boundary would be required.
- Construction access would be required via both Scott Park and the existing school playing fields.

Site Appraisal : Area 3



- ✓
 - Can facilitate construction of the new build whilst the existing facility remains operational.
 - The building would have strong links to the town and the local community.
 - Strong civic presence.
 - Good aspect and daylighting.
 - Minimal roads infrastructure.
 - Maintains the existing buildings relationship with Scott Park.
 - Establishes a relationship between Oakwood Park Sheltered Housing and Waverley Care home, promoting intergeneration use of the campus.
 - Sports Pitches, playground spaces and resulting noise and light pollution are kept away from residential properties.
 - Adequate play space can be provided around the building.
 - Maintains a reasonable distance between surrounding residential properties and the new campus.
- ✗
 - Would necessitate the partial re-provision of Scott Park.
 - Planning considerations with regards Policy EP11.
 - Would necessitate the partial removal of the existing tennis courts.
 - Proposed reprovided parkland divided by vehicular service access.

Site Appraisal : Area 4



- ✓
 - The new campus and associated sports provision would all be contained within the existing school site.
 - School car parking is provided on site and existing site access points are retained.
- ✗
 - The new campus would be remote from the site's main pedestrian links to the town centre.
 - The civic presence of the campus would be greatly reduced due to its location - building appears tucked away and hidden from view.
 - The campus would be particularly close to the housing on Elm Grove.
 - The proposed location would involve constructing on or adjacent to challenging topography.
 - Demolition of the existing school annex building would be required causing disruption to the operation of the school during construction.
 - A significant number of protected trees would have to be removed.
 - The daylighting afforded to the building will be compromised by overshadowing from surrounding woodland.
 - Futureproofing options are limited as the proposed buildings location is constrained.

Site Appraisal : Area 5

- ✓ The new building would not encroach on Scott Park, albeit the required school sports provision (pitches) would.
- School car parking is provided on site and existing site access points are retained.
- ✗ This proposal would require the temporary decant of the entire school roll in to either another available vacant and suitable building or in to temporary accommodation - off or on site.
- Sports pitches would require to be located on both the east and west elevations of the proposed building - lacking cohesion.



**APPENDIX 4
CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM**



EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

**STATUTORY CONSULTATION IN RELATION TO THE
PROPOSAL FOR THE RELOCATION OF GALASHIELS
ACADEMY**

Detail of the Proposal

Scottish Borders Council is seeking views on proposals to relocate Galashiels Academy to a new build learning and community campus site in Scott Park, Galashiels, comprising a major part of the existing Academy site and part of Scott Park.

The proposed site can be seen on the plan attached to this form:-

Introduction

- 1. What is your name? (Optional)**

- 2. What is your email address? (Optional)**

If you enter your email address your email address will be added to SBC's list for future correspondence and updates regarding this Proposal. Your email will not be used for any other purpose

- 3. What is your postcode?**

4. Please tick the most relevant box below to indicate which school(s) you are connected with

- Galashiels Academy
- Balmoral Primary School
- Burgh Primary School
- Glendinning Terrace Primary School
- Langlee Primary School
- St Margaret's RC Primary School
- St Peter's Primary School
- Clovenfords Primary School
- Fountainhall Primary School
- Heriot Primary School
- Stow Primary School
- Tweedbank Primary School
- Other – please state in box below

--

5. Please tick the most relevant box below to indicate your interest in the in the School(s)

<i>Parent/carer</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Pupil</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Relative of Pupil</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Parent Council Member</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Elected Member/MSP/MP</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Community Planning Partner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Community Member</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other</i>	



6. Do you agree with the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy to a new build campus site in Scott Park, Galashiels

Please select only one item

Agree

Disagree

Don't Know

Please state your reasons

- 7 Please provide us with your comments or alternative suggestions regarding the relocation/replacement of Galashiels Academy



CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESPONSE

Your response, but not your personal information, will form part of a report that is submitted to Education Scotland and will be available to the public. Do you wish your comments to be considered as confidential so they will only be seen by Elected Members, officers of Scottish Borders Council and Education Scotland?

Yes No

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO GIVE US YOUR VIEWS

Your completed form can be handed into your local school or posted to: Galashiels Academy Consultation, Education & Lifelong Learning, And Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St Boswells TD6 0SA. You can also give us your views online at –

[Galashiels Academy Consultation On-line](#)

BY 12 MAY 2023

If you have any queries, please email: schoolestates@scotborders.gov.uk

The information you have provided will be processed by Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St Boswells, and TD6. You can contact the Council on 0300 100 1800 or customerservices@scotborders.gov.uk. The Council's Data Protection Officer can be contacted using the contact details for the Council as set out above or by email at dataprotection@scotborders.gov.uk We will use your information to assess the reaction within the community to our proposal. The Council is collecting and using this information to keep respondents up to date with the progress of the proposal. The information you have provided will be retained 6 months

APPENDIX 2

Report from Education Scotland dated May 2023



Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Scottish Borders Council to relocate Galashiels Academy.

May 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Scottish Borders Council's proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for young people of the school; any other users; and children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- 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
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 20 April 2023 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Galashiels Academy, Burgh, Clovenfords, Heriot, Langlee, St Margaret's RC, and Tweedbank Primary Schools including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Scottish Borders Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The council undertook the consultation between 13 March and 12 May 2023. The proposal was communicated to stakeholders via the council website, through social media and local press. The consultation paper was made available in the affected schools and other council buildings, and formal notice was given to a wide range of consultees. Scottish Borders Council held a public meeting at Galashiels Academy on 20 April 2023. This was attended by approximately 50 members of the community including a few school staff, parents and young people. Eight officials, including one elected member and two representatives from Galashiels Academy leadership team, were also present. Scottish Borders Council received 127 responses to their online survey. Responses were received from a mixture of parents, staff and members of the local

community. A majority (66%) agree with the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy, a minority (29%) did not agree. A few (4%) did not know, and a few (2%) selected both agree and disagree to this question.

2.3 Overall, respondents to the survey largely recognise and support the need for a new school building to replace the existing aging campus. Where expressed, objections largely relate to the location of the new school on local parkland and why the school could not have been built on an alternative site. Other concerns raised within the survey responses relate to details regarding the design of the building, particularly aspects of the internal layout.

2.4 In order to progress the building programme and comply with funding requirements, the council's project board has allowed preparatory work to progress in tandem with this consultation proposal. The project board has acknowledged and accepted that there is a risk attached to undertaking these works before a final decision is made regarding the new school. HM Inspectors agree that this is a risk. In responding to the survey, a few stakeholders were confused by the timing and purpose of the consultation as they understood that the plan to build a new school had already been agreed.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 In their proposal, Scottish Borders Council set out a broad range of educational benefits for pupils, including pupils with additional support needs, and for other users of the school's facilities. These benefits include a modern learning environment designed to meet the current and future needs of a variety of learners, and a flexible design that supports a broad curriculum offer. The council states that the building provides more spaces for vocational learning and training in skills, and that more natural daylight will support wellbeing. There are also enhanced sport and recreational facilities for school and community use. The new building is intended to offer young people with complex physical and medical needs opportunities to learn across the whole school. HM Inspectors agree that there are significant potential benefits. In order for the council to fully realise their vision, they should continue to work closely with key stakeholders to ensure that the final design is able to fulfil their aspirations.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors strongly support the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy adjacent to its current location. Almost all children and young people are looking forward to learning within a modern building designed to meet their needs. Overall, they like the design and welcome particular features such as increased social areas and study spaces. Young people at Galashiels Academy with a keen interest in sport are particularly enthusiastic about the enhanced physical education and sport facilities. Other young people who have a particular interest in the performing arts would like more clarity on what the new building will offer in terms of improved facilities for drama and music performances. Almost all children from the associated primary schools who met with HM Inspectors are excited about the prospect of a new Galashiels Academy. The opportunity to view a virtual tour of the new school has made them curious and is helping them to understand the potential educational benefits that the building offers.

3.3 All parents who met with HM Inspectors strongly support the proposal. They appreciate the investment in their child's learning and the potential of the new learning environment to strengthen and extend the curriculum offer. A few parents, young people and staff who met with HM Inspectors expressed some concerns about certain aspects of the new school. This includes the extensive use of glass and some semi-open plan learning spaces which they feel could be a distraction to learning. A few stakeholders were worried about safety in some aspects of the design, and in particular, how the areas used by the community would be securely separated from access to other learning spaces. They would like further information about how school and

community use of shared facilities will be used and operated safely. A few parents and staff would also like reassurance that the council will use the experience from other new school building programmes to maximise the education benefits that the new Galashiels Academy can provide. The council and senior leadership team should continue to work with stakeholders to provide assurance that their concerns are being listened to and addressed.

3.4 Staff from Galashiels Academy, and associated primary schools visited by HM Inspectors, recognise the need for a new modern building for the benefit of the young people of Galashiels. Staff are largely supportive of the proposal. A few staff would like assurance that the new facilities will have sufficient capacity to meet the current and future mix of complex physical and medical needs of the young people within the enhanced provision. A few staff would like assurance that they will be able to access appropriate spaces for non-class contact time and breaks. The council and senior leadership team should continue to engage with staff as they finalise the design and implement the school building programme.

3.5 HM Inspectors met with the Catholic Church's representative for Scottish Borders Council. The Catholic Church strongly support the proposal and recognise the potential educational benefits for young people who will attend the new Galashiels Academy. They did not identify anything in the proposal of particular concern to Catholic education.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are significant potential educational benefits from the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy adjacent to its current location. The new building will provide a modern, welcoming and flexible learning environment. The planned design, although not yet finalised, should offer a variety of learning spaces well-equipped to meet the needs of young people and be adaptable to a changing curriculum offer. The enhanced sports facilities will continue to support the traditionally high levels of participation in Galashiels. Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors, and a majority of people who responded to the council's survey, strongly support the proposal. The design, which is at an advanced stage, is already informed by a wide range of stakeholders. However, a few stakeholders have raised concerns about some aspects of the current design. It will be important for the council and senior leadership team to continue to listen, work closely with, and keep stakeholders informed should the proposal go ahead. This will support the council to fulfil their aspirational vision for the new Galashiels Academy.

HM Inspectors
May 2023

APPENDIX 3

VIDEO FLYTHROUGH OF PROPOSED REPLACEMENT ACADEMY

[Galashiels Academy new build - fly through - YouTube \(please click\)](#)

Appendix 4

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING AT GALASHIELS ACADEMY ON 20 APRIL 2023

Statutory Consultation regarding Proposal to Relocate Galashiels Academy

Minutes of Public Meeting

20 April 2023 at Galashiels Academy

Panel: Lesley Munro (Director of Education & Lifelong Learning) - LR
Steven Renwick (Projects Manager) -SR
Justin Sinclair (Chief Education Officer) – JS
Christian Robertson (Senior Lead Officer Education & Lifelong Learning) - CR
Gillian Sellar (Principal Solicitor) - GS
Leagh Douglas (Councillor & Portfolio Holder for Education & Lifelong Learning) - LD
Kevin Ryalls (Headteacher Galashiels Academy) - KR
Malcolm Changleng (Depute Headteacher Galashiels Academy) – MC

Introduction and Presentation

The meeting was commenced following an opportunity for attendees to review the current proposals for the new building and discuss the proposal with the design and project team.

LM Introduced the panel

KR Gave a presentation regarding the vision, inspiration and community for the New School.

Questions and Answers

- Q. There is no argument that a new school is required. The location is the main issue, the community do not want to lose Scott Park.
- A. This message has been heard clearly - Throughout the planning process various locations were looked at and analysed to decide on the best location. This process has been ongoing for a few years with the opportunity for online consultations to be sought. The Scott park location was decided on due to various factors including funding, disruption and connectivity.

Q. The main issue is that the community feels they had no opportunity to give any input regarding the location and the community feel that Scott Park should not be used as this was gifted to the people of Galashiels.

A. We can understand the frustrations, however the Planning was carried out during the Covid restrictions which possibly limited the options for open public consultations as these had to be done online. It was felt that to delay until after the Covid restrictions were lifted to start with the planning process could be detrimental to the education of our young people.

Q. Parking and the Swimming Pool – why not just keep using/upgrade the swimming pool? How accessible will the facilities be for Intergenerational community members will parking be suitable for all abilities.

A. The parking and facilities were tested out throughout the planning process and they found it was necessary to be fully supportable and inclusive to allow access for all facilities and accessible parking would be necessary for this.

Q. Why could the new school not be built on the existing playing fields?

A. There are a variety of reasons – all location options were reviewed with the Councillors preferred location coming out as a portion of Scott Park (interrupted)

Q. Where is the report for the options appraisal? I don't think a full appraisal report for all 5 original location options was carried out. What were the final justifications for the choice of Scott Park? What were the mitigating factors for discounting the other possible locations? What are the Educational benefits to the other locations that were being looked at?

A. The educational benefits are not exclusive on location, education is the number one priority to Councillors. There were a range of measures that were considered when location was discussed including - cost, location, disruption, connectivity. Overall it was felt that remaining next to the existing provision would be more beneficial to the pupils. The pupil's response to a consultation was that they would prefer to still be close to the town. Being closer to the care home could have benefits for both the residents and the pupils to collaborate, and connect the different generations.

Comment: Do not agree that minimising disruption of the education of current pupils is an Educational Benefit

Q. The green space in the plans for Scott Park is not suitable as this space is widely used by the community – the paths in the plan are going to cut up the space, the decisions on these plans are showing that the councillors are not representing the whole community.

A. None of the possible locations was discounted just due to one single point, there were full reports, studies, pre planning, and planning with each location being tested for viability. Councillors will had the best interests of all parties in mind when the decisions were made.

LD – LD and SR had a meeting to discuss all locations. Disruption was a main contributing factor to the choice for the location of Scott Park. There was a lot of discussion regarding the reconfiguring of the green space and at all of the public consultations there was a lot more positive feedback than negative, and no matter what decision was made there would always be resistance to the changes.

Q. Sustainability – What is the effect of the school on the Climate Crisis and the rationale for energy saving?

A. The whole school build has 10 factors which must be met to ensure that the funding is awarded by the Scottish Government these include maintenance, energy efficiency, connectivity (IT) and sustainability. The school will be constructed with high insulation, low energy, as close to carbon zero emissions as possible.

Q. Will wind farms be erected on the school footprint?

A. There are no plans for a wind farm

Q. Why has the climate crisis not been mentioned – The students should be encouraged to become Champions of the environment

A. The school will be looking for a clean air transition to net zero, possibly there could be a look at curriculum covering sustainability, hopefully the community attending the facilities will be able to walk rather than drive, and the pupils could use the outside spaces for learning spaces.

Q/Comment. Rubbish

A. Hopefully the new school will encourage more pupils to stay during the lunch break time which should reduce any littering along with education of pupils to prevent littering.

Q. How long will the construction disrupt the education provision?

A. The construction will be staged to minimise the disruption to learning.

A. Flat ground will be available as the playing fields will be retained during construction – there are both short and long term opportunities for the wider community to work within groups to facilitate the requirements.

Q. There has been no consultation – The plans don't look like they have been future proofed – Does this mean that more of the park will be lost if expansion is required? If required could we look at reusing abandoned buildings for expansion?

A. During the planning process the consultation guidelines were followed, at present the roll is 800 the school will provide a 15% roll increase, this is following a roll project which has been robustly calculated in conjunction with input from housing a planning, we are confident that the school will be the correct size for the area. There has been no indication throughout the planning that there will be any need for expansion.

Q. There looks to be no hard standing that can be used in case of evacuation – safety issue?

A. Evacuation was discussed with Fire Scotland, there will be safe assembly points. The school would not be allowed to open without a fire evacuation plan and health and safety would have to sign off this plan. There will be hard standing. The landscape plans have just been finalised and these plans will be posted online.

Q. What is the percentage of open plan learning spaces in the internal configuration?

A. The Head Teacher has worked through the plans to devise the flexible teaching spaces, there will be non-traditional learning spaces which will give more flexibility and allow a wider context on teaching, and these collaborative spaces will be able to be separated. There are a high number of enclosed spaces, but it was planned to give as many learning opportunities as possible. We think we have the configuration right. It will be comparable to the new school at Peebles. Plans will be published with details of the rooms etc.

Q. The staff have concerns regarding the collaboration areas, I compiled a staff survey regarding this and there are many wide ranging concerns, and the pupils did not want these open spaces after visiting Jedburgh.

A. A report will be done and we will need to make sure that staff are supported on how best to utilise these spaces (Jedburgh staff have offered to come and discuss with staff their transition stories regarding these flexible spaces). We need to bear in mind though "What will education look like in the future?" The curriculum could change and the school needs to be flexible enough to change to accommodate this.

Q. Can research be done with staff to prove that open plan learning spaces work are the best for educating our young people?

A. LM will arrange meetings to address any staff concerns. It is very important to look at the plans in detail as there are plenty of traditional teaching spaces, but also the benefit of these more flexible spaces. What we are hoping for is a world class future proofed facility.

Q. How will this benefit every child – where is the proof that this design is better than the traditional style school?

A. There will be better facilities for sports, STEM etc.

Q. But what is the proof that this will improve the outcome on education with this specific layout?

A. Having the opportunity to offer more interdisciplinary learning. Information will be shared with staff.

Q. In 1936/7 Henry Scott who was on the Town council gifted Scott Park to the community of Galashiels with the proviso that it must be kept grass to be used for football, cricket etc., and that there should be no building. It was stated that if these conditions are not met the land could be revoked. These deeds should be located to ensure that the conditions are being met. What happens if this is a breach of the conditions? The school should have been built on the existing playing fields. And the plans should have been shown to the community before starting work.

A. The title has been checked to ensure the build is allowed. We are 100% confident that we can build the school here. Plans/Drawings will be published very soon.

Q. Why are you building this with a flat roof? This is only going to lead to problems in the future.

A. An apex roof is difficult and not cost effective, but a maintenance plan has been put in place for the future.

Q. Why so many pitches at the back of the school? What about provision for other sports for life? Why remove the tennis courts, there should be provision for all sports.

A. The plans are open to all avenues of sports including competitive sports. There is at present plans for 3 outdoor tennis courts, but they are awaiting authorisation to provide 4 All-weather courts which will be covered.

Q. What about toilets for the tennis courts?

A. The toilets in the school will be available.

Q. That is not acceptable, children cannot just go into the school by themselves, or the coaches stop the session to take a child to the toilet. There needs to be at least two toilets and hand basins beside the courts.

A. We can look into this.

Q. How will the new school areas be good for the STEM subjects?

A. New spaces with the staff having an input into the design and layout of these new flexible spaces, with separate sections for sciences and technical subjects. The plans will be shared with pupils to show the designs of the different subject areas.

Q. Why can we not have a single site web page with access to all of the documents regarding this new school, as it is hard to find all the relevant information?

A. This will be coming soon and will include links to reports and documents and online consultations.

Q. Can we not seek information from other local authorities who already use open/flexible learning spaces to get feedback from the teaching staff?

A. This was already done with the staff from Jedburgh who offered feedback to the teachers on both the good and bad points. But it is a good idea to speak to other authorities, the attainment director is looking at this already

Q. I have been given an opinion by a QC that the land at Scott Park cannot be built on. We support the provision of a new school but not the location. I am unconvinced on the reasons for the choice of location, and feel I have still not had a sufficient answer as to the criteria for discounting the other possible sites. It would be improper to build due to the wording of the deed. The proposed Local Development Plan is being examined by the Reporter. What happens if it turns out that the Reporter does not agree with your approach to Green Spaces? How will you mitigate the financial loss if planning is rejected?

A. We will revert to you regarding the proposed Local Development Plan in our Consultation Report as we do not have all the detail available at the moment. We have taken a measured risk by starting the works whilst waiting for the final planning permission and approval, but the planners gave permission to start the ground works. The process was undertaken with legal and planning input. A consultation report will be compiled and will go to the council for final approval and passing.

Q. I would still like to know what the education benefits for the chosen location are.

A. The Educational Benefits are in our Proposal Paper. Sorry but we are out of time for this evening, but we will note in the minutes that a significant group of the attendees tonight feel that the wrong location has been chosen.

Meeting Closed