
GALASHIELS ACADEMY RELOCATION

Report by Lesley Munro, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

29 June 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the completion of a public consultation process as set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), this report requests that Elected Members approve the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy to a site comprising the existing Academy site and part of Scott Park.**
- 1.2 On 13 May 2021, Elected Members agreed to undertake a statutory consultation in respect of a proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy.
- 1.3 The consultation period ran from 13 March until 12 May 2023. A proposal paper was published and advertised detailing the Educational Benefits of the proposal and the reasons for choosing the proposed site. Meetings were held with pupils and staff during May and a public meeting was held on 20 April 2023, where there was an opportunity to discuss the proposals, ask questions and make comments.
- 1.4 The Council received 127 responses to the consultation:-
- 66% agreed with the proposal;
 - 29% did not agree; and
 - 5% didn't know.
- 1.5 A consultation report has been prepared detailing the consultation process, with summaries of the comments and representations made during the consultation. A copy of the consultation report is annexed to this Report. The report also contains the Council's responses to the comments and representations. The report was published on 6 June 2023, with the Council inviting further comments and suggestions regarding the proposal. The last date for comments was 27 June 2023. The responses received prior to the publication of this report are detailed later in this report. A verbal update of any further responses will be provided at the meeting.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Scottish Borders Council approves the proposal to relocate Galashiels Academy to a site comprising the existing school site and part of the town's Scott Park.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In November 2018, Elected Members agreed to prioritise the replacement of Galashiels Academy. Since then extensive work has been undertaken to both choose a site and design a new school to meet the future requirements of learners within the Galashiels cluster.
- 3.2 Following an appraisal of the potential sites for development, Elected Members agreed in May 2021 to undertake a statutory consultation regarding a proposal to relocate the Academy.
- 3.3 A Proposal Paper was prepared and published on 13 March 2023. The consultation period ran until 12 May 2023. During this period pupils, parents, staff and the wider community were invited to consider the proposal and make comments and alternative suggestions to the proposal. Meetings were held in May with pupils, primary and secondary, staff and a public meeting was held on 20 April 2023, where everyone was invited to attend and ask questions and share their views.
- 3.4 Education Scotland have reviewed the proposal and the consultation process and have met with and consulted with staff and parents to discuss the Proposal. Education Scotland published a report on 6 June 2023 recognising the "Significant Potential Educational Benefits" of the Proposal.

4 CONSULTATION REPORT

- 4.1 In accordance with statutory requirements, Officers have prepared a Consultation Report, which details the consultation process as well as the comments and representations made throughout the consultation process. The Consultation Reports also contains responses to the comments and representations made during the consultation process. A copy of the Consultation Report is attached as **Appendix 1** to this Report, The Consultation Report also contains copies of the Proposal Paper, minutes of the Public Meeting and the Education Scotland report.
- 4.2 The 2010 Act states that the Education Authority may only proceed with a "relevant proposal" after they have published a Consultation Report, and have provided interested parties with a further period of three weeks to raise concerns or pose alternative solutions through written or electronic submissions. The Consultation Report was prepared and published on 6 June 2023 and interested parties were invited to take part in the consultation process until 27 June 2023. Notice of the publication of the Consultation Report was given to those that the Council held contact details for that had (1) responded to the consultation on the proposal paper and (2) attended the public meeting. In addition parents and all elected representatives for the area were written to advising of the further consultation. During the 3 week consultation period regarding the Consultation Report, the Council's Communications team also publicised the opportunity for interested parties to engage with the consultation.

- 4.3 At the time of writing this Report, there have been [13] responses made. The comments received are summarised in **Appendix 2** to this Report. Verbal updates of the comments and representations made following publication of this report will be provided at the Meeting.
- 4.4 The responses received were predominantly from parents [62%], with teachers providing [23%]; the remainder were from the Community. The majority of comments were very supportive of the proposal; however it should be noted that there will still concerns being raised by some respondents. The concerns predominantly centred round:-
- The loss of part of Scott Park
 - The flexible nature of some of the learning spaces
 - The impact on the roads and pedestrian safety
 - Public access to the building
- 4.5 These issues/concerns were responded to within the Consultation Report and have been noted by the Project Team. The design for the school has not yet been finalised and there will be further engagement with staff and parents and pupils as the design progresses.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

The relocation and building of the new Academy and Community Campus requires significant financial support from the Scottish Government. Council Officers have worked with the Scottish Government to secure funding. The Scottish Government have confirmed that they will provide a significant proportion of funding for an acceptable project at Galashiels providing certain metrics are met. These metrics include:-

- Internal Environmental Quality
- Energy Targets and Efficiency
- Digital Requirements, Infrastructure Technology and Digitally Enabled Learning
- Economic Growth
- Quality Agenda – of design, procurement, construction and project team
- Project Completion/Delivery
- School Condition for 25 years

Officers will ensure that the metrics are and will continue to be met.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

Planning permission was obtained on 5 September 2022. There is a risk that, if approved, that construction does not take place within the timeframe specified by the Scottish Government funding proposal. This has been mitigated through the assembly of a strong professional team, which has considerable expertise in delivering projects of this scale. A collaborative approach has been adopted at all times to provide the community with as much detail as possible regarding the planning proposals, and the Consultation. Council officers will undertake to continue to engage with all stakeholders in relation to the design strategy to ensure a strong community “buy- in” should the proposal to relocate and build go ahead.

5.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

An Integrated Impact Assessment is underway in respect of the proposal to relocate and build a new school. The Assessment will be published once it has been finalised.

5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

Economic, social and environmental issues are fully incorporated within the statutory consultation documentation.

5.5 **Climate Change**

The new building has been designed to meet the Scottish Government requirements regarding energy targets and efficiencies. It is also proposed that considerable work will be undertaken regarding improvements to Scott Park and the park will be expanded. It is also proposed that as much of the existing school as possible will be repurposed or recycled.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

N/A

5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

N/A

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Acting Chief Financial Officer, the Acting Chief Corporate Governance Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director People Performance & Change and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Lesley Munro

Director Education & Lifelong Learning

Author(s)

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Background Papers: Appendix Consultation Paper

Previous Minute Reference: Nil

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