

Great Park Academy New School Project Information Update

We'd like to say thank you to our parents/carers who attended our second information meeting on 13th February 2023 and for your questions and concerns raised.

We thought it would be useful to provide everyone with a summary of the key points and updates that were discussed on the night.

Permanent Site Update

Funding Increase

The budget for the new school has been increased for a second time. The DfE monitors the market closely and adapts where necessary. As a result it has brought in two funding increases, the first in summer 2022 and the second in January this year. This increased budget has been taken into account in the procurement process.

Procurement

The DfE project team worked very closely with the DfE Construction Framework Team, including undertaking further early engagement with contractors. On Friday 10th February two bidders returned tenders which are now being evaluated.

Key Milestones

PERMANENT SITE MILESTONES	STATUS	INDICATIVE TIMESCALE
Alternative procurement route considerations and market testing undertaken	Complete	October /November 2022
Transition to DfE Construction Framework 21 (CF21)	Complete	November /December 2022
Appoint contractor via a pre-construction services agreement (PCSA) to progress design, surveys and reserved matters planning application.	In progress	Spring 2023
Contract Award /Start on site (with the construction programme confirmed at this stage)		Autumn 2023
Completion on site		Summer term 2024/25

The project is running to schedule, the building contract will be awarded in time for works to start in late autumn this year, and we are still confident the school will open to students for the summer

term of 2024/2025. We will continue to provide termly Permanent Site Updates via the News & Events section of the school website.

Next Steps

- Tender evaluation process – to be completed by the end of February 2023
- Drafting a pre-construction services agreement (PCSA) covering design, surveys and the planning application
- DfE Approvals process - March 2023
- PCSA signed - March /April 2023
- Design meetings with the trust/school will begin in April 2023. The school will coordinate input from pupils into some of the design process and as the project progresses there will also be lots of possibilities for curriculum links and learning opportunities.

Temporary Site Update

Contractor

A contractor has been selected to provide the additional classrooms, ancillary provision (such as toilets) and to re-surface an existing area of hardstanding for P.E. The DfE team are currently in the process of agreeing the Pre-construction Services Agreement.

Planning and highways

Since December there has been early engagement with Newcastle City Council planning and highways teams. As part of this the scope for a transport assessment, which will form part of the planning application, has been agreed. It is expected that the transport assessment will include a parent/carer survey to understand the modes of transport and the impact on the site.

Accessing specialist facilities

Gosforth Group are fully committed to continuing to provide the very best teaching and learning experience over the next two years. Plans for using facilities at Gosforth Academy and across the Trust are well underway. Great Park Academy leadership team have looked carefully at what is needed to provide both a full, rich curriculum and an excellent range of enrichment activities. This has been shared with the Trust's Executive Team and detailed planning will take place over the next half term as timetables for next year are planned and the specialist subject leaders for Great Park Academy are appointed.

Transport Update

In December transport was discussed as part of a meeting between MP Catherine McKinnell and the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb. The topic will be part of the regular updates and reports from the DfE Project Director to the MP and Minister and will be discussed again at a follow-up meeting in March.

An initial meeting has been held between Newcastle City Council and Nexus to discuss secondary school transport including the issues affecting Great Park Academy.

Newcastle City Council and Gosforth Group have collected data and collated information on existing travel patterns to the temporary site (including forecasting likely future needs).

Development of a school travel plan for Great Park Academy for the next two years is underway. Gosforth Group is also reviewing and updating school travel plans across all its schools

Next Steps

- A meeting has been arranged in early March with Head of Corporate Planning at Nexus to get their commitment at a senior, strategic level and to start to explore possible options around bus routes, scholar buses etc.
- A transport assessment to support the temporary site expansion planning application will be completed. This will include:
 - surveys and data collection from the school and surrounding areas
 - an assessment of travel strategies (pedestrian, cycling, car, buses)
 - the impact on highways /the transport network
 - recommendations for any mitigations if required
- Linked to the transport assessment, the School /Gosforth Group will review and develop the school travel plan.
- Transport will continue to feature in the regular strategic meetings between the DfE project team, the DfE Capital and Regions Group, Newcastle City Council and Gosforth Group.
- Gosforth Group will issue a further update to parent/carers at the end of the spring term.