



**Proposed free school opening September 2021**

# **Report on Section 10 public consultation**

**9 November 2020 – 7 December 2020**

**'Create your future'**



## Executive Summary

Great Park Academy is a non-selective, non-denominational 9 -16 secondary school in the pre-opening phase with a planned opening date of September 2021. The school will be part of the Gosforth Group, along with five other schools across Newcastle upon Tyne. This report outlines the engagement with our stakeholders alongside the formal Section 10 consultation.

Great Park Academy will, as its central mission, focus on ensuring that young people enjoy access to a truly inspirational academy that will mirror the success of other outstanding institutions in the Gosforth Group.

Our new school will be dynamic and diverse – demonstrating a clear energy and purpose where all students are valued, regardless of their background or ability. We pride ourselves on our comprehensive intake and our inclusive approach.

The initial engagement with stakeholders opened in 2015 when Gosforth Group began discussions with Newcastle City Council regarding the need for a new free school. Formal statutory consultation ran from 9 November 2020 to 7 December 2020. Suggestions and comments have been considered, responded to where appropriate and will be shared to ensure they are incorporated into planning proposals where relevant.

### Gosforth Group – the proposer

Gosforth Group is an education charity and not-for-profit Multi-Academy Trust. We are a dynamic organisation, recognised across Newcastle upon Tyne as one of the highest performing family of schools; currently with four established academies and two free schools at pre-opening phase.

Our principal aim is to encourage high expectations and high standard of achievement, both academic and personal. Our values embrace honesty, trust, reliability, creativity, respect for the legitimate rights of others, care for the vulnerable members of society, regard for the environment and kindness towards other people.

We believe that a safe, calm, friendly, disciplined atmosphere, in which hard work and cooperation are respected, is the best way to promote these values.

*'Create your future' encapsulates our purpose as a Multi-Academy Trust: to educate, support and nurture all of our students so they can achieve their potential and fulfil their ambitious aspirations.*

At Great Park Academy we will foster the progress of children as global citizens as well as members of the Gosforth Group community. These core values will be communicated through a focused assembly programme, outstanding teaching and learning, and PHSE study. We will retain a firm emphasis on academic progress and attainment at the school, focusing on high aspirations and a wide, varied and accurately targeted curriculum to create appropriate, closely tailored pathways for all pupils.

Our praise code delivers a clear discipline system as well as significant rewards for the majority of pupils who behave and work to the high standards that we expect of them. This system of sanction and reward has equity at its core; it demands that all students will be treated in the same way, regardless of difference or background. The pastoral care will be exceptional, with dedicated teams dealing quickly and effectively with issues of safeguarding and care for the whole child. Active community and parental involvement, for example, will be encouraged and a wide range of extra-curricular activities will be offered through activity weeks and school trips.

The primary focus at Great Park Academy will be to instil a lifelong love of learning, encouraging pupils to be confident, hard-working and ambitious, regardless of background. Mentoring activities will be underpinned by a key focus on 'character education'. We want to produce aspirational, confident people who are active and reflective contributors to the communities, local and global, that they belong to.

## **Initial phase**

**Gosforth Group was informed of its successful bid to open a new free school in February 2016. In deciding to submit a bid the trust undertook various stakeholder engagement.**

Methods used to reach stakeholders in advance of the formal consultation have included:

- Extensive discussions with the local authority, including representatives of the Director of Children, Education and Skills. At these meetings Newcastle City Council indicated their full support for the free school due to the need for additional school places;
- Gosforth Academy website updates;
- Local consultation prior to the bid submission;
- Meetings of the Chief Executive Officer with local headteachers;
- Newsletter items;
- Online 'Keeping in Touch' updates;
- Published FAQs.

## Statutory consultation

The statutory Section 10 consultation commenced on 9 November 2020 and ran for four weeks to 7 December 2020.

Information provided to stakeholders took the following forms:

- Public consultation booklet. This was made available in electronic format and printed form and was specifically sent to a wide range of stakeholders, providing information on how feedback could be given;
- A new Great Park Academy website carried information about the proposed new school, the consultation process and a downloadable consultation booklet;
- The Great Park Academy website also provided an online (and downloadable) questionnaire to complete.

Regrettably, due to COVID-19 restrictions we were unable to host any public meetings or drop in events. Instead we publicised an online message board to encourage stakeholders to safely submit any questions directly to the trust. This was also supported by a dedicated email address [S10Consultation@ga.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:S10Consultation@ga.newcastle.sch.uk) as a further means of garnering feedback.

### Stakeholders

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted including:

- Local parents and carers;
- Local residents;
- Headteachers, governors and staff at Newcastle upon Tyne primary and secondary schools;
- Newcastle City Council's Director of Children, Education and Skills
- Local authority ward councillors;
- Officers of the neighbouring Northumberland County Council

## Statutory consultation results and responses

### Website

There were 211 views of the Great Park Academy Section 10 consultation web page.

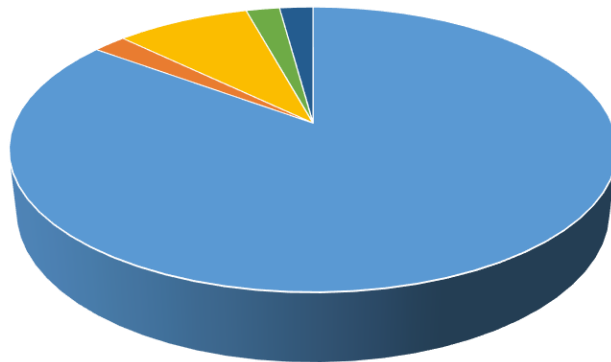
### Online questionnaire

47 consultation questionnaire responses were received, all online.

Replies to the seven questions asked were as follows:

1. About you: which of the following best describes you?

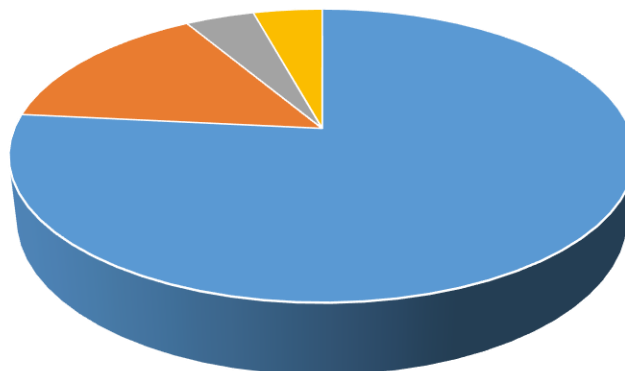
Parent/ carer	40
Member of staff or governor at a local school	1
Elected member	0
Local resident	4
Local business owner	0
Local authority employee	1
Other	1



- Parent/ carer
- Member of staff or governor at a local school
- Elected member
- Local resident
- Local business owner
- Local authority employee
- Other

2. Where do you live, approximately, in relation to the proposed site?

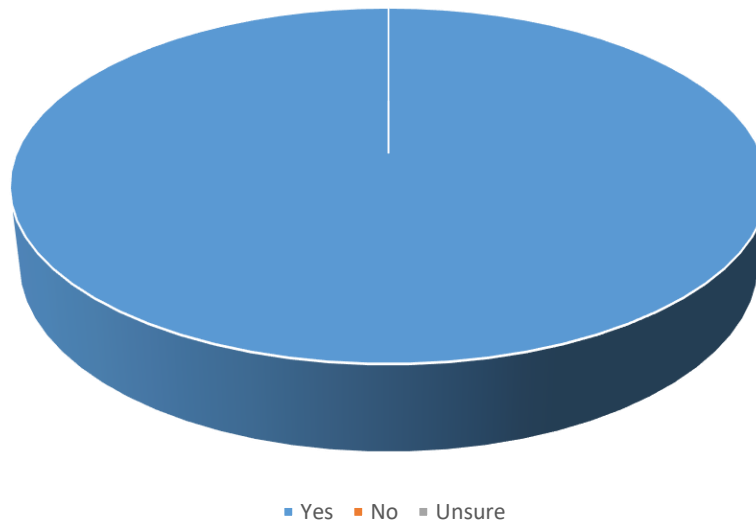
Within 1 mile	36
Within 3 miles	7
Within 5 miles	2
Greater than 5 miles	2



- Within 1 mile
- Within 3 miles
- Within 5 miles
- Greater than 5 miles

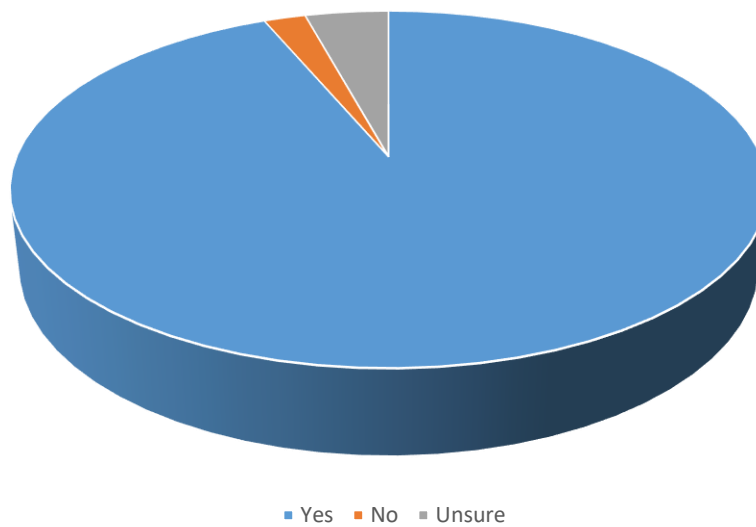
3. Do you agree that opening the proposed Great Park Academy will provide extra choice for parents and meet a need to provide additional school places in Newcastle?

Yes	47
No	0
Unsure	0



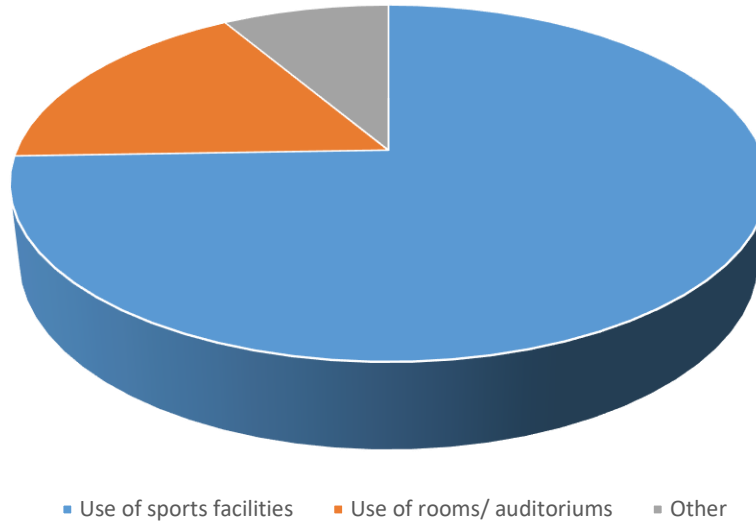
4. Do you agree that the vision and values of Great Park Academy meet the needs of the community?

Yes	44
No	1
Unsure	2



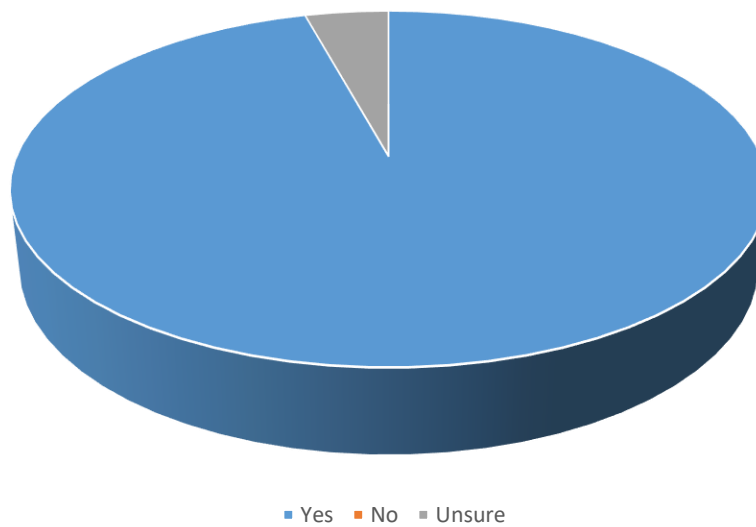
5. We want the school to be an important part of the local community. Are there any services you would like the school to offer the local community?

Use of sports facilities	35
Use of rooms/ auditoriums	8
Other	4



6. Should Gosforth Group enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education in order to open this school?

Yes	45
No	0
Unsure	2





7. Please provide any comments and feedback

There were 18 qualitative responses to this question.

#### Response 1

*"We are desperate for this school!"*

#### Response 2

*"Would welcome this much needed new school as soon as possible. I would be keen to know when the intake will grow beyond 60 as an intake of 60 does not even cover one full year group from Brunton First School never mind Broadway First School which will both have children wishing to attend the Great Park Academy."*

#### Response 3

*"I would like some more information about the new school. We don't know what it will be like. I'm also really unsure about sending my child to a temporary building for 2 years on a high school site."*

#### Response 4

*"The ever growing great park community desperately need more school provision. This new school is very much needed."*

#### Response 5

*"Great Park has grown very quickly over the years and there are many families reside here. A school is needed urgently to cater for the children of these families and nearby areas now and for future families. There are too many children and not enough schools for the Gosforth system to cope so the school needs to be built as soon as possible."*

#### Response 6

*"My son is in year 4 at Brunton First School, he is one of 90 children who will be looking for places in middle schools within the Gosforth area. Not having a middle school on Great Park means we will have to travel. I was hoping the GPA would be open so that he could walk to school with his friends. Opening a temporary building for 60 children on a site we would still have to drive too is a shambles. What happens to the next year 5 intake if GPA takes two-three years to build? Where do the extra children go then? Why build a primary school before a middle school when it's a middle school that Great Park needs as a matter of urgency! I love the idea of GPA free school but the uncertainty of when it will be built has really made me doubt it all together. These poor children and their parents!"*

#### Response 7

*"The school is long overdue. Please consider sibling places for older students as part of your opening strategy so family groups can be in the same school together."*

#### Response 8

*"We can't wait for this school to be opened! It is very much needed in Great Park. It would be brilliant to have access to sport facilities such as a gym too."*

### Response 9

*"The school is desperately needed within the area due to the numbers of houses being built and number of children accessing the education system on a primary level. "*

### Response 10

*"The opening of this educational provision really needed to happen 20 years ago when the Great Park was built. It ought to be an absolute local scandal that such a high profile estate aimed at families was built with only a one class first school as educational provision. That school has now expanded to three classes, but middle and high school education is still lacking. This is a problem for the local Great Park community, but it is also a problem for the Gosforth community where I live, as the lack of schooling has created problems for my children's middle school (Gosforth Junior Academy). Firstly the school has had to expand beyond its intended size (and is larger than the ideal size for a Middle School) to accommodate children from the Great Park (it is now about the same size as some secondary schools), which I feel has put a strain on the school's facilities because the building just wasn't designed for such numbers. Secondly there are real problems created by the Great Park children travelling into Gosforth. This isn't the fault of those families (as there aren't any safe cycling or walking routes so inevitably many will drive), but Gosforth is an Air Quality Management Area where emissions ought to be being reduced due to their adverse effect on people's health - not increased by having so many children driving into it to go to school because their own community has no schools. Road safety is also a real issue in Gosforth that particularly affects children as it limits playing out and independent travel, and again the traffic generated by the lack of school places in the Great Park adds to this problem. These comments should in no way be seen as reflecting badly on the Gosforth school pyramid, who have done their best to accommodate the Great Park children by expanding several schools to create places, but it does feel like the limit to this has been reached, yet the Great Park estates are still expanding. My view is that both communities will benefit from the Great Park having its own schools and this will also fit in with Newcastle City Council's plan for the 15 minutes' city. My main concern is that the Great Park Academy will not have its own 6th form, and given the size of the Great Park estates I do think that will be a lot of children to accommodate on the Gosforth Academy site and that the new school will be the same size as other schools that have a 6th form. A much better solution would have been to build a new 6th form facility for the children at the Great Park and at Callerton Academy as both are on the west side of the A1 and could easily be linked by cycling paths so that the students can travel independently to school. To have children from both academies to commute to either Gosforth Academy or to Jesmond Park Academy really does not seem to be a sensible idea given the traffic queues into the city at peak times (I would estimate a 30 - 45 minute commute if driving), not least because they will be travelling past other schools with 6th form provision. Newcastle City Council have begun to take steps to reduce vehicle traffic due to the illegal levels of air pollution in Grainger Town and in Gosforth (they are legally required to do this) so I think you really have to plan for more action happening in future. The Council may well be concerned about the routes that your students would take to visit these sites, as routes such as Station Road, Haddricks Mill Junction, Gosforth High Street and the Coast Road are known to be air pollution hotspots. Last year's air quality report also highlighted several routes*

*in the West End as having illegal levels of air pollution, and this may also affect your students travelling to school."*

#### **Response 11**

*"This is an absolute essential school as the situation is at crisis point regarding school places. Priority needs to be given to the middle and secondary school to ensure that it is fit for purpose no later than 2022. There should be no hesitation in creating an agreement to ensure that this goes ahead. "*

#### **Response 12**

*"This school is greatly needed to accommodate the children on the Great Park and is something we have been promised for many years. The delay in the opening of this school is having a negative impact for parents and causes stress for parents with younger siblings coming through the system."*

#### **Response 13**

*"The new school is desperately needed by the local community to provide the necessary school places/education for the current and future first school leavers. It is our hope that the building of this school is progressed as quickly as possible as it should already be in place but has been subject to a number of delays that haven't been transparent over the last few years."*

#### **Response 14**

*"This is an essential school which will support the rising number of pupils that require an education in the Great Park."*

#### **Response 15**

*"I am in complete favour of the school opening as soon as possible. The growing number of houses on the Great Park shows no signs of slowing. As such I am extremely interested to find out the basis of admissions for the new school. Surely it makes sense for this to be the nominated feeder school for Brunton First; as GEMs is nominated for GPFS and Central is nominated for Archibald etc. Will this be the case? On the same note, the entry number of 60 is particularly disappointing as there are 90 pupils in the current Y4 group at Brunton. Offering only 60 places is not only disappointing for many but is equally divisive within the Great Park Community. Can the temporary buildings not be 'rejigged' to accommodate all? As a parent I would really rather have an all or nothing approach, it seems so unfair to leave out 1/3 of the pupils particularly in the current climate when young people are in desperate need of emotional stability. To that end, on what criteria will admissions be based? I have trawled the council website and have struggled to find this out. I look forward to the response of the consultation."*

#### **Response 16**

*"We need as many high quality state schools in Newcastle as we can get. The choice has been historically very poor and has led to high usage of the private sector which is not good for reducing inequalities."*

### Response 17

*“As the Trust is very aware, the new school is needed to ensure sufficiency of schools provision across the city as well as addressing current future needs linked to the substantial housing growth in Newcastle Great Park. We are delighted that this is now progressing.”*

### Response 18

*“I have two children at Brunton First School. The new School cannot come soon enough, so that is great news! However, there are 90 in each of my children's year groups, the proposed 60 places is going to result in 30 children being displaced from the school. This cannot be the best thing for the children who all live on Great Park. Please can you rethink your proposal to incorporate all 90 children? The Great Park is still expanding and the number of children can only increase. The School has been part of the plans for GP since the very start, as Brunton First is set up to have 90 children in each year group I cannot accept that this will not be catered for in your plans, I live on the Melbury Development and as such have been a resident for over 12 years, can you share the admissions criteria for the new school as I am concerned that due to the number of new homes on the school side of the A1 they will get priority. I am deeply saddened that 30 children out of a fantastic friendly school are going to be forced out by a poor planning decision. Please reconsider.*

## Message board

The message board for Great Park Academy received two submissions:

**Question 1:** *If the school opens in 2021 in the temporary building, could my child in two years having started the school find themselves without secondary education if the problems and delays continue?*

**Answer:** *Once your child is offered a start for September 2021, their place is secure through to Year 11.*

**Question 2:** *If the temporary school opens in 2021 and the planning permission for the new site does not get agreed, this would mean further delays, could my child spend more than two years in the temporary building?*

**Answer:** *The building being used temporarily for Great Park Academy is purpose-built accommodation and a brand-new permanent asset of the Gosforth Academy site, which opened in September 2020. It will be used by Great Park Academy from September 2021 until the new permanent school is ready for occupation.*

*The Secretary of State will only approve the funding agreement if there is confidence that the new school will be ready and open for September 2023. Whilst every effort will be made by the Department for Education to deliver to that timeframe, and that is what we are working toward, they cannot guarantee that the project will not be delayed. As a contingency, any temporary location agreed by the Secretary of State must demonstrate the capacity to accommodate the school should a project be delayed.*

[S10Consultation@ga.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:S10Consultation@ga.newcastle.sch.uk)

There was no feedback through the S10 email address in relation to the Great Park Academy consultation.

## **Conclusion and next steps**

There has been extensive ongoing consultation with a wide range of stakeholders since the earliest stages of development of the proposal for this school. Feedback has been overwhelmingly supportive and positive.

We are confident Great Park Academy will provide much needed places for parents/ carers in the community and this is fully supported by Newcastle City Council. The trust will now begin the process of agreeing a Funding Agreement for Great Park Academy with the Secretary of State for Education.

We would like to thank all stakeholders who have taken time to read and hear about our exciting plans and provide feedback. We will, of course, continue to work with stakeholders through the planning and building phases of the new school.