

**TITLE OF REPORT: Consultation on the Proposal to Rebuild, Relocate and Permanently Expand Gibside School****REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report asks Cabinet to consider the responses to the recent consultation on the proposal to rebuild, relocate and permanently expand Gibside School from 130 to 170 places.

**Background**

2. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires local authorities to adopt a strategic role with a duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school provision. This is only possible when there are sufficient numbers of school places situated within the right location.
3. The Government is committed to ensuring that every parent can have access to an excellent school for their children and that it should be easier for successful and popular schools to grow to meet parental demand. The wishes of parents must be taken into account when managing school estates and places should be offered whenever possible to where parents want them.
4. The Department for Education provides basic need funding to improve the school estate and expand schools where the council feels it is appropriate to do so. In using these funds, Care, Wellbeing and Learning identified that special needs provision was a priority, in order to provide additional places to accommodate children within Gateshead due to the increasing demand for special needs provision and to reduce council spending on out of borough placements.
5. Gibside School is currently located at Burnthouse Lane, Whickham and meets the needs of children aged 3 – 11 years with profound multiple learning difficulties. It also meets the needs of children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and children with complex communication and medical needs.
6. Gateshead Council was allocated £11.6 million basic need funding for additional school places to fund this new project. An additional £500k of SEN capital funding will also be used to supplement the basic need funding.
7. In June 2018 Cabinet gave approval to consult on the rebuild, relocation and expansion of Gibside School. The consultation process took place over a four-week period from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and invited comments from a number of stakeholders. The aim of the consultation was to provide an opportunity for a wide

range of stakeholders to give feedback on the proposal to relocate, rebuild and expand the school.

8. There were 97 responses. 71% of respondents agreed that Gibside School should be rebuilt and increased in size, 15% disagreed and 13% were undecided.
9. 51% of respondents agreed that Gibside School should be rebuilt on the former Shipcote Playing Field site, 38% disagreed and 11% were undecided

### **Proposal**

10. The proposal is to transfer the current Gibside School to a new site on the former Shipcote Playing Field and expand its numbers to develop a new build school for 170 pupils. This new school will include hydrotherapy facilities and cater for the needs of children aged 3 to 11 years.
11. The proposed expansion of Gibside School from Autumn 2020 will provide a new build school on a new central site geographically serving the whole of Gateshead due to the sites excellent transport links.

### **Recommendations**

12. It is recommended that Cabinet agrees to proceed with the relocation, rebuild and expansion of Gibside School for the following reasons:
  - (i) To meet the council's statutory duty to promote high educational standards and make effective use of resources.
  - (ii) To increase opportunities for parental choice when planning for the provision of schools.
  - (iii) To meet the requirements for school place planning purposes in order to provide sufficient places for future years.

## APPENDIX 1

### Policy Context

1. The Council has statutory duties to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access, promote diversity and make efficient use of its resources.
2. The proposals in this report are consistent with statutory duties and with the vision of children and young people as set out in Vision 2030, and the Council's strategic approach of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.

### Background

3. The Guidance from the Department of Education, *Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers (October 2018)* states that decision makers will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and/or representation has been carried out and the proposer has given full consideration to all responses received. They should give the greatest weight to those stakeholders who are most likely to be affected by a proposal especially parents of children at the affected school.

### Consultation

4. Consultation documents (Appendix 2) were available on the council web site and were also circulated to a variety of stakeholders, as required in the Department for Education guidance; *Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers*.
5. A total of 97 responses were received:
  - 9 from parent/carers of children attending Gibside School.
  - 2 from staff members at Gibside School.
  - 37 from someone living or working near to the proposed new school site.
  - 21 from someone living or working near to the existing school site.
  - 28 from someone else
6. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People and Ward Councillors have been consulted.

### Outcomes from the Consultation

7. All the responses from parents/carers of children attending Gibside School were positive on the relocation, rebuilding and expansion of the school. Respondents felt that expansion was essential to increase the quality of work the school could provide for a greater number of children and in a more central location. The only concerns raised were;
  - whether the proposed new school would provide sufficient places in the long term
  - whether the parking area was large enough, including the increased drop off area, so as to avoid any potential traffic congestion and impact in the Shipcote area.

8. The main concern from respondent's who were going to be living or working in the area of the new school site was the loss of communal green space and the impact on parking in the area. The site is also currently used as overflow parking for both the leisure centre and Library. Residents were concerned about the impact that additional traffic in the area would have and that consideration should be given to parking permits for the immediate vicinity of the new school site. Some respondents were however supportive of the new school as they '*regarded the area as a blot on the landscape*'.
9. In addition, concerns were raised about;
- the future use of the current Gibside School
  - the limited communal space in the winter months when Saltwell Park is closed (after dark)

### **Alternative Options**

10. Gibside School is not bound by a specific catchment area as its specialist facilities serve the whole borough. Alternative sites were considered; however, these were discounted due to the cost, planning and transport implications or the designation for strategic housing.

### **Implications of Recommended Option**

#### **11. Resources:**

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms the majority of the costs for the new build will be met by basic needs and SEN capital funding, but there is a potential shortfall which is currently being considered.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – Trade Unions have been consulted on this proposal as well as staff, governors, families, parents and community members as part of the formal consultation process and their views and comments have been taken into consideration
- c) **Property Implications** - The future of the current Gibside site will need to be considered

12. **Risk Management Implication** - Without an increase provision there is the risk that the needs of these pupils will have to continue to be met out of borough, which has cost implications

13. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - None

14. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report.

15. **Health Implications** – There are no implications arising from this report

16. **Sustainability Implications** - None

17. **Human Rights Implications-** The implications of the Human Rights Act must be considered in any decision that involves a change in policy, function or service change. If implemented the proposal will positively enhance a child's right not to be denied an education.
18. **Area and Ward Implications** - This report will have immediate implications for the Saltwell and Whickham South wards but will also impact borough wide.

### **Background Information**

19. Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers October 2018.

### Gibside School Consultation

Gateshead Council is consulting from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019 on the proposal to re-build and relocate Gibside School from its current site on Burnthouse Lane, Whickham to the former Shipcote Playing Field to take effect from Autumn 2020.

This document sets out details about;

- The proposal
- The current position
- Rationale
- How you can give your views

#### The Proposal

The council is proposing to;

Transfer Gibside School to a new site on the former Shipcote Playing Field from Autumn 2020.

The school will be expanded from 130 to 170 places (an increase of 40 places)

#### The Current Position

Gibside is a purpose-built primary school for children aged 3 – 11 years. The teaching and non-teaching staff work in a multi-disciplinary setting with professionals from Health, Social and Psychological Services along with other voluntary agencies. The school meets the needs of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), children with severe learning difficulties as well as those with complex communication and medical needs. Gibside School is currently rated as “Outstanding” by Ofsted.

#### Rationale

Some children will need special educational help that cannot be provided in mainstream primary and secondary schools. There are currently six special schools in Gateshead. Gateshead Council works closely with schools, academies and partners to co-ordinate, commission and provide a wide range of specialist services to support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and their families.

There is a rising number of children in Gateshead with complex needs for whom curriculum access at a special school is necessary. There has been an increase in the number of Education Health Care Plan's over the past five years and the number of placements being made out of authority to independent and non-maintained special schools has also increased.

The increasing number of children diagnosed with ASD has led to has led to increased number of children with an EHCP within all Gateshead schools. Gateshead currently has children waiting for a placement in Gibside School which is the most appropriate school to meet their needs.

Gibside School currently admits children from 2 to 11 years of age following an extension to the school in 2015 to provide free 2-year-old places for those children with an EHCP.

## **Alternative options**

Should the Council not increase the number of places available at Gibside School, there is currently no surplus capacity at either the main Gibside site or at the Blaydon/Winlaton sites. The forecast numbers on roll indicates that if there is no increase in capacity the Local Authority will have to send Gateshead children out of borough to meet their educational needs at a cost of £38k per autistic child and £46k per child with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Extending the current site on Burnthouse Lane would unlikely be supported due to transport issues an increase in pupil numbers would bring. This would not be sustainable on an already congested site adjacent to residential streets and being located next to a secondary and primary school.

Extending the provision currently being provided at the Blaydon/Winlaton Sure Start Centre. The building is a purpose-built children's centre to deliver integrated services to families with children under the age of five. At present there is a short-term arrangement whereby Gibside School operate within a defined area of the building. This arrangement restricts the area used by children's centre services and impacts on the delivery of services to the community. Access to suitable drop off/pick up areas is a current concern which would be further compounded by increasing numbers.

Gibside School is not bound by a specific catchment area as it's specialist facilities serve the whole borough. Alternative sites have been considered, however, they were not feasible due to either cost, planning and transport implications or the designation of the sites for strategic housing use. The site at Shipcote Playing Field is relatively flat and is geographically central with excellent transport links which should reduce home to school transport costs and enable Gateshead children to access the specialist provision they need without the need to go out of borough.

## **New Building**

The proposal is to transfer Gibside School to a new site on the former Shipcote Playing Field (see attached appendix 1 and 2) and expand its numbers to develop a new build school for 170 pupils. This new school will include hydrotherapy facilities and cater for the needs of children from the age of 2 to 11 years.

The proposed expansion of Gibside School from Autumn 2020 will provide a new build school for 170 pupils on a new site central site geographically serving the whole of Gateshead which has access to excellent transport links. The school is currently located at Burnthouse Lane, Whickham and has a further Early Years Foundation Stage provision off site at Blaydon/Winlaton Children's Centre. There are significant transport issues due to the constraints of its current site on Burnthouse Lane and there is insufficient space within Blaydon/Winlaton Children's Centre.

## **Consultation**

In order to meet the statutory requirements to provide additional places from Autumn 2020, Cabinet approved in June 2018 the proposal to rebuild Gibside School. The statutory consultation process is outlined in "Opening and closing maintained schools, Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers" November 2018.

## **Conclusion**

This is an opportunity to expand and rebuild Gibside School to provide high quality bespoke education provision and alleviate the issues the school currently has in relation to

the current split site premises. To increase the number of places available from 130 to 170 children will also enable the Council to reduce the cost of procuring places out of borough to meet the needs of children with ASD and complex communication and medical needs. The Council is committed to further develop inclusive education for all pupils in Gateshead. This proposal will contribute to Gateshead's overarching SEN strategy and ensure that there are sufficient places in outstanding special schools with fit for purpose facilities for Gateshead children who require them.

### **How you can give your views**

We want your views on the rebuilding and relocation of Gibside School to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to have their say on this new and important development in education provision in Gateshead.

You can take part in this consultation by clicking on the "Take Part" button below or you can write to;

Ian Stewart,  
Education Support Service,  
educationGateshead,  
The Dryden Centre,  
Low Fell,  
Gateshead.  
NE9 5UR.



**The Borough Council of Gateshead  
Proposal for the relocation and expansion of Gibside School  
Statutory Notice**

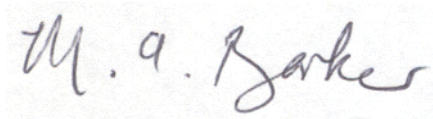
In accordance with statutory guidance "Opening and closing maintained schools, Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers" November 2018, notice is given in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that The Borough Council of Gateshead, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 1HH intends to make a prescribed alteration to rebuild and expand Gibside School, Burnthouse Lane, Whickham NE16 5AT from the Autumn term 2020.

The Local Authority is proposing to transfer Gibside School to a new site on the former Shipcote Playing Field and expand the number of places available from 130 to 170 within a purpose-built new school. This new school will cater for the needs of children from the age of 2 to 11 years.

This proposal will contribute to Gateshead's SEN strategy and will ensure that there are sufficient places in outstanding special schools with fit for purpose facilities for Gateshead children who require them.

Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from:  
Steve Horne, Service Director - Learning and Schools, educationGateshead, Dryden Centre, Evistones Road, Gateshead NE9 5UR or it can be downloaded from:  
[www.gateshead.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/consultations)

Within 4 weeks from the date of publication of this Statutory Notice, any person can object to, or make comments on the proposal by sending them to:  
Mike Barker, Solicitor to the Council, Legal and Corporate Services,  
Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH by 12 noon on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2016.  
Signed



Mike Barker  
Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance.

CONSTRUCTION NOTES:  
 1. ALL WORK TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATEST EDITIONS OF THE BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION (BSI) CODES OF PRACTICE.  
 2. ALL MATERIALS TO BE OF THE BEST QUALITY AND TO BE SUPPLIED BY THE CONTRACTOR.  
 3. ALL WORK TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE SPECIFIED TIME FRAME.  
 4. ALL WORK TO BE COMPLETED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE ARCHITECT AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.  
 5. ALL WORK TO BE COMPLETED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS.

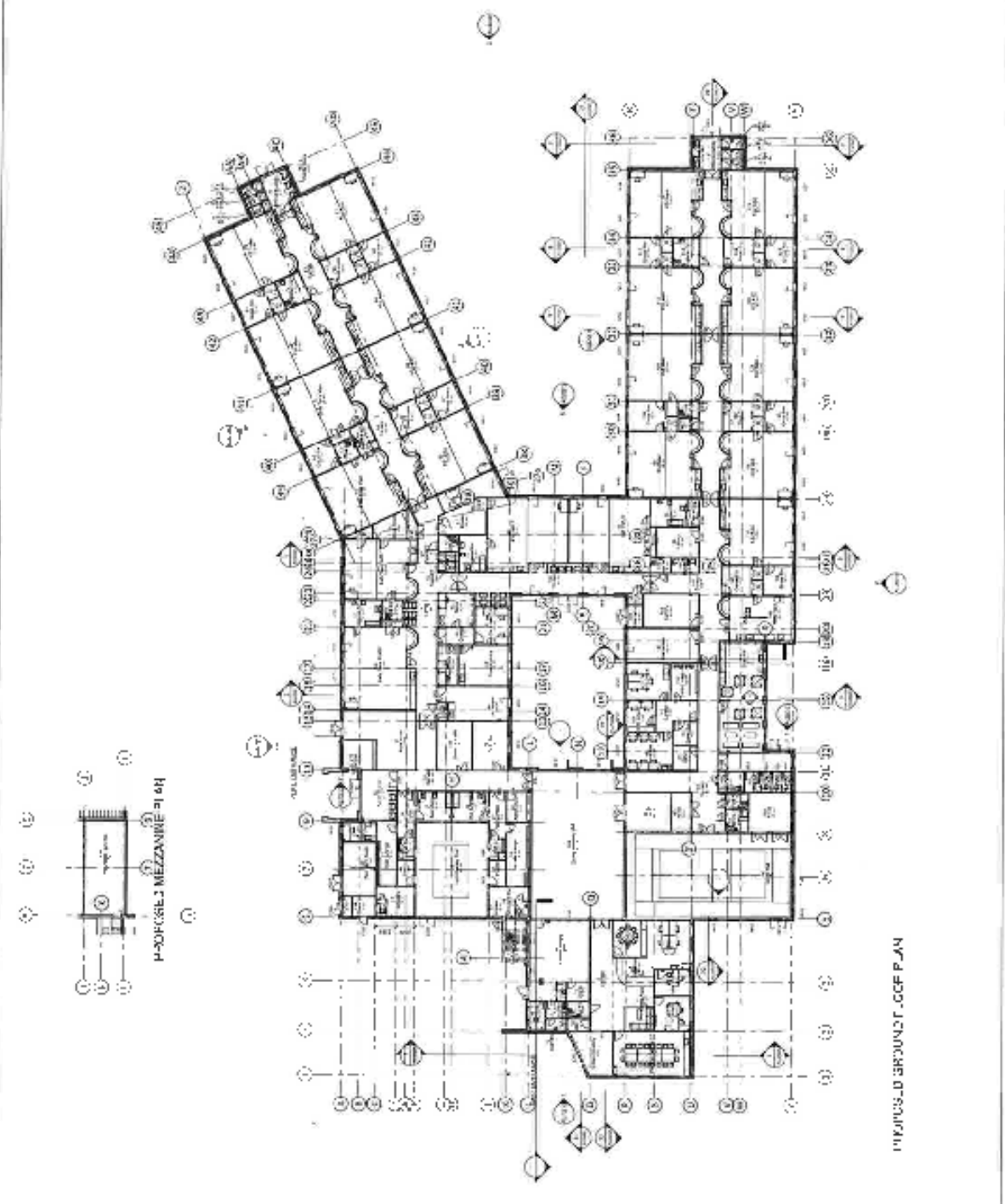
STAGE 1  
 1. ALL WORK TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE SPECIFIED TIME FRAME.  
 2. ALL WORK TO BE COMPLETED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE ARCHITECT AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.  
 3. ALL WORK TO BE COMPLETED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS.

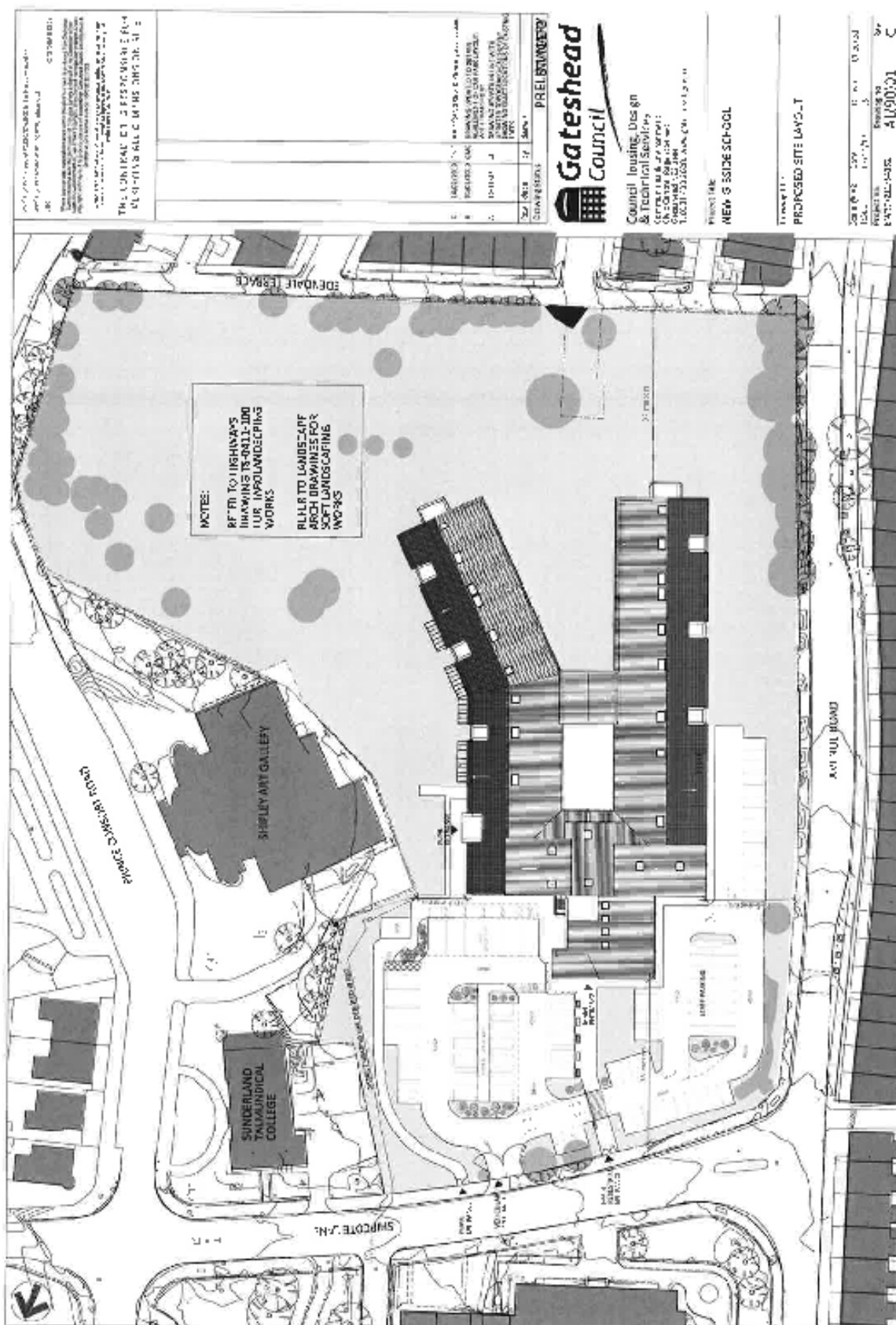
**Gateshead Council**

Ground Floor Plan  
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 2. ALL WORK TO BE COMPLETED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE ARCHITECT AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.  
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DRAWINGS		DATE	BY	CHKD	APPD
1	PRELIMINARY	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
2	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
3	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
4	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
5	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
6	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
7	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
8	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
9	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		
10	FINAL	10/10/10	J. SMITH		

**Gateshead Council**

Council Housing, Design & Technical Services  
 Central and Commercial  
 Gateshead, Tyne and Wear  
 NE11 1JH

PROJECT NAME  
 NEW 8 SIDE SCHOOL

PROJECT NO.  
 10000000000000000000

PROPOSED SITE LAYS - T

DATE: 10/10/10  
 BY: J. SMITH  
 CHECKED: J. SMITH  
 APPROVED: J. SMITH