

July 2022 update

Issued by South Gloucestershire Council, Olympus Academy Trust, Castle School Education Trust and South West Regional Schools Commissioner's Office, Department of Education

Discussions to finalise the funding arrangements and procurement processes for the new secondary school are continuing. We have not yet been able to finalise all the details, but we do anticipate construction of the new primary and secondary school to commence in 2023. Therefore, to provide surety to families who will be looking to apply for school places in the autumn for the following academic year, we must with regret defer the anticipated opening date for the new secondary school for Lyde Green until September 2024.

This also means that the construction of the new primary school, delivered as part of a single project with the secondary school, will also be delayed.

The council will continue to work with existing schools in the local area to ensure that there are sufficient places to meet demand both in the primary and secondary phases until the new buildings are available. This will include providing transport assistance when the nearest suitable school is not within walking distance of home.

All partners are fully committed to delivering the new, state of the art schools for the community at the earliest opportunity. However, the challenging market conditions in the construction industry continue to impact on project costs and the Council and Department for Education must ensure that the final plans focus on securing best value within a reasonable timescale.

Whilst the negotiations on the new school buildings are taking longer than anticipated, good progress has been made on creation of the shared-use sports facilities, which will benefit the new schools – both primary and secondary – as well as local sports clubs and the wider community. We are aiming for these to be ready for community use later this year and will share details of how they will be managed and made available in due course.

We commit to updating the community on progress again no later than the end of September 2022.

South Gloucestershire Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Schools, Councillor Erica Williams, said: "We recognise and share the frustration that families will feel at the ongoing delay to this project. The challenges being faced by developers of all major projects, in terms of rising costs and availability of supplies, are being felt as we look to finalise our plans for these new schools for Lyde Green.

“We are excited about what will be delivered, but recognise that does not compensate for the delay. We want to be able to provide clarity for families, which is why we are now taking the decision to formally defer the anticipated opening date to September 2024.

Dave Baker, CEO of the Olympus Academy Trust, which will run the new secondary school, said: “We share the school community’s frustration, but we want to be clear and open with families. We are committed to delivering the new school and to providing the best possible learning environment.

“Across our Olympus family of schools and with partner primaries in and around Lyde Green, we will continue to work with pupils and families to facilitate the transition to the new school when it is complete. We have appointed a very experienced Olympus senior leader, Tom Hill, as Headteacher for Lyde Green and we are fully committed to providing the best possible school and learning experience at the earliest opportunity.”

William Roberts, CEO of CSET, which will run the new primary school, said: “It is very disappointing that the opening of the second primary school for Lyde Green has been further delayed. Over recent years CSET has worked with South Gloucestershire Council to provide the additional primary and secondary places needed for Lyde Green children, and we will continue to do everything we can to accommodate as many local children as possible in existing schools whilst we wait for the new provision to open.”

The Department for Education have confirmed that it is “committed to working closely with South Gloucestershire Council in their delivery of the new school.”

Rob Shipp, Construction Manager at BAM Construction, responsible for designing and building the school said: “BAM are excited about the project and have been working extremely hard with all stakeholders to design a sustainable, top-class facility that will deliver a superior learning environment. With the industry-wide cost and supply challenges it is important that the scheme provides best value for money.