

Report of Director of Children’s Services

Report to Executive Board

Date: 4th September 2013

Subject: Change of host school for Primary resourced provision for deaf and hearing impaired children – permission to consult



Are specific electoral Wards affected? Yes If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Roundhay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

- 1 Cottingley Primary School (Cottingley Primary Academy from 1st December 2012), has been the host school for the Local Authority’s city-wide specialist resourced provision for deaf and hearing impaired children. There are now no children or staff in the provision and the agreement between the Local Authority and the Academy regarding the service provided within the resourced provision has expired. There is no intention to renew the agreement.
- 2 Cottingley Primary Academy is in the South Area of the city. The secondary provision for deaf and hearing impaired children is at Allerton Grange High School, in the East North East Area of the City. Therefore, whilst most deaf children at Cottingley transferred to Allerton Grange, few if any of their hearing peers transferred with them. In order to provide pupils with greater continuity in education, social groupings and service provision Children’s Services are seeking to relocate the primary provision into a mainstream school in the East North East area of the city which is a “feeder school” for Allerton Grange High School with effect from September 2014. It is proposed that this school is Moor Allerton Hall Primary School. This would enable deaf and hearing impaired children to transition to secondary school with their hearing peers and would also facilitate close working across the primary and secondary school settings.

- 3 Children's Services wish the provision to be at a school judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted. Prior to Academy transfer, Cottingley Primary School was judged to be "inadequate".
- 4 Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 these proposals constitute prescribed alterations requiring a statutory consultation process. The first step of this process is a public consultation, which would run from 16 September 2013 to 25th October 2013.
- 5 This paper seeks permission to start that public consultation.

Recommendations

- 6 The Executive Board is asked to approve a consultation on the addition of provision at Moor Allerton Hall Primary School that is recognised by the Local Authority as reserved for pupils who are deaf and hearing impaired, with effect from September 2014.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report requests permission to consult on the addition of provision reserved by the Local Authority for deaf and hearing impaired children at Moor Allerton Hall Primary School. .

2 Background information

- 2.1 The resourced provision for deaf and hearing impaired children at Cottingley Primary Academy catered for the needs of up to 14 pupils with severe or profound hearing loss. It was a city wide resource for pupils throughout Leeds who require this specialist level of intervention. To attend a specialist provision it is necessary to have a statement of Special Educational Needs that identifies the severity of need, the type and level of support required to meet those needs and that names the provision as the specified placement. Due to parental representations there are now no deaf or hearing impaired children within the provision nor any intention to place such children there in the future. The resourced provision for deaf and hearing impaired children of secondary school age is at Allerton Grange High School. This performs the same function and has the same entry criteria as the primary provision. As a result of this the majority of pupils who exit the primary provision at Year 6 go on to the secondary provision.
- 2.2 Historically, the two provisions have been in different areas of the City. Allerton Grange is in the East North East, while Cottingley is in the South. The two schools are 7.4 miles apart. As a result the deaf and hearing impaired children transferring to Allerton Grange have not been able to transfer with their hearing peers and friends. The distance between the two schools and the lack of any natural connectivity between them also does not support the close working on a professional level which would be of benefit to both staff and pupils and could potentially offer some efficiencies.
- 2.3 Moor Allerton Hall Primary school is one of the main “feeders” of children into Allerton Grange. The sites of the two schools adjoin each other.
- 2.4 The overall effectiveness of Cottingley Primary School was judged to be “inadequate” in the Ofsted inspection report of May 2012. Since that date the school has become an Academy sponsored by Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- 2.5 The parents of deaf and hearing impaired children have consistently indicated that they do not want to send their children to Cottingley. They have met with City Council officers and the Deputy Leader of the Council and have expressed their strong desire for the provision to be moved elsewhere.
- 2.6 As a result of parental preference there are now no children in the provision at Cottingley, as they have moved to other schools. Parents and professionals however, recognise for the reasons stated below in 3.1, a strong need remains for

a specialist primary resourced provision for the most severely and profoundly deaf children in Leeds.

- 2.7 The agreement between the Local Authority and Cottingley Primary Academy for the provision of services within the resourced provision expired on 31st March 2013. There is no intention to enter into a further contractual agreement to provide this service. A separate user agreement covering the Local Authority's use of the premises is in existence. The intention is for this to be terminated following a delegated decision by the Director of Children's Services.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 A specialist primary resource is vital for some children with severe or profound hearing loss. It provides specialist teaching and support to children using both oral and signed communication, whilst also providing appropriate integration into mainstream classes with hearing peers. It provides the opportunity to develop the skills of mainstream staff alongside those of the specialists in terms of meeting the educational needs of deaf and hearing impaired learners. It allows for the use of bilingual education in British Sign Language and English depending upon context and individual needs. A resourced provision also provides a deaf peer group and deaf adult role models, both of which are important for the development of communication skills and the social and emotional development of deaf children. It is currently not possible to provide this peer group at Cottingley due to parental choice to send children elsewhere.
- 3.2 As the primary and secondary resourced provisions have been situated so far apart from each other, the deaf and hearing impaired children have not been able to transition to secondary school with their hearing peers. This is difficult for deaf children who face barriers in establishing friendship groups and who can become isolated and vulnerable in secondary schools.
- 3.3 Children's Services, through their own deliberations and at the behest of parents and the National deaf Children's Society decided to investigate other potential primary schools to host the provision. The criteria for this search were that the new host school should:
- be a feeder school to Allerton Grange – i.e. a significant number of pupils transfer there each year
 - be judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted
 - have a good track record in SEN and inclusion
 - have space within its building or grounds to accommodate the physical requirements of the provision
 - be keen to include deaf pupils and see the benefits of this for the whole school community.
- 3.4 Children's services staff undertook extensive investigation into which schools met these criteria, and followed this up with site visits and discussions with the most appropriate schools. Following these discussions the decision was made that Moor Allerton Hall Primary School was the preferred option for developing the new provision. The reasons for this decision are summarised below.

- 3.5 In summer 2012, 20 out of the 32 Year 6 pupils at Moor Allerton Hall transitioned to Allerton Grange. This represents 62.5% of their overall Year 6 cohort, one of the biggest, if not the biggest, transfer rate or any primary school into Allerton Grange. This will allow deaf children to move to secondary school with their hearing peers, and will greatly enhance the overall transition process for them.
- 3.6 The Ofsted report of Moor Allerton Hall Primary School published in November 2012 rated the school as “good” in every area of its findings. It stated that “All pupils including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who attract extra funding through the pupil premium make good progress from many different starting points and achieve well”. The report also described the leadership of the headteacher as “inspired”
- 3.7 The Head, senior managers and the governing body at Moor Allerton Hall are keen to host the resourced provision and to provide for deaf and hearing impaired children as an integral part of their school. The Governing Body of the school supports the Local Authority’s proposal to consult on the addition of the provision to the school.
- 3.8 The specialist staff in the primary and secondary resourced provisions are, and will be, employed by the Local Authority’s Sensory Service. A considerable advantage in siting the provision at Moor Allerton is that it will allow for specialist staff to easily work between the two provisions as appropriate. This will be of benefit to the LA as well as the deaf and hearing impaired children.
- 3.9 It will be necessary to conduct a feasibility study to look at how appropriate physical space for the provision can be created at Moor Allerton Hall such that the needs of all children within the school are met. In order to meet the proposed dates for the statutory change to this provision it will be necessary to commission feasibility work at risk during the statutory public consultation stage. The development of the physical design solution will run alongside the statutory process but will remain independent and will be subject to separate consultation, governance and approval routes.
- 3.10 When planning any reorganisation of SEN provision the LA must demonstrate to parents, the local community and decision makers how the proposals will lead to improvements on the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The movement of the provision from Cottingley Primary Academy to Moor Allerton Hall Primary School will provide these improvements for deaf and hearing impaired children by
- Providing education for them in a school which is deemed by Ofsted to be “good”, with inspirational leadership.
 - Providing a more seamless transition to secondary school, through schools which are already closely linked and transition many pupils between them annually.
 - Giving profoundly deaf children the opportunity to transition to high school (Allerton Grange) with their hearing friends and peers. This will mean their communication methods are already better understood and practiced. They will be more accepted, happier, more included and less vulnerable.

- Giving parents the opportunity to send their deaf and hearing impaired children to specialist provision in a school that they feel confident will meet their educational, social and emotional needs.
- Providing a deaf peer group for deaf children. This is very important for deaf children and does not exist at Cottingley as through parental choice all deaf children have now left the school.
- Providing for more readily available specialist support and teaching by allowing flexible and swift movement of staff between Moor Allerton Hall and the adjacent Allerton Grange High School resourced provision.
- Creating a specialist base which will provide more suitable physical accommodation than has been available at Cottingley Primary School or Cottingley Primary Academy.

3.11 A full SEN Improvement Test will be conducted as part of the consultation process.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The parents of the deaf and hearing impaired children, with the support of the National Deaf Children's Society, have made clear that they wish the provision be moved from Cottingley. They have agreed that it should be relocated to a good or outstanding school which is a "feeder" for Allerton Grange. Parents have been assured that they, along with the voluntary sector and other stakeholders will be consulted and involved in planning the new provision.

4.1.2 The proposals have been discussed in as much detail as possible with the headteacher and the governors at Moor Allerton Hall. They have been supportive of us moving to statutory consultation and feasibility work. They will of course remain fully involved at all times.

4.1.3 The report seeks permission of the Executive Board to move to statutory consultation on the proposal to add the provision at Moor Allerton Hall Primary School. This would involve the publication of information and the fullest consultation with all stakeholders and interested parties.

4.1.4 The consultation would be conducted in line with statutory guidance and local good practice. Consultation would take place from 16th September to 25th October 2013.

4.1.5 Feedback from previous consultation regarding the conduct of consultation will be taken into account should these proposals proceed to the next phase. The proposed consultation is prescribed under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and should the proposals progress would require a further statutory notice period prior to final decision being made.

4.1.6 The Academies Enterprise Trust (sponsor of Cottingley Primary Academy) is supportive of the City Council's decision to move the provision to a more suitable location.

4.1.7 No statutory consultation is required with Cottingley Primary Academy. Statutory consultation is required in relation to prescribed school changes to maintained schools only. As the provision has effectively ceased at Cottingley, and as the Academy supports the Local Authority's plans to formally discontinue the provision at Cottingley, the Local Authority does not intend to engage the schools' staff and its community in consultation on this proposal.

4.2 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 The proposals in this paper would bring about greater continuity in education, social groupings and service provision for deaf and hearing impaired children. It is expected that this will improve their outcomes both academically and socially. The EDCI impact assessment screening tool has been completed and is attached at appendix 1.

4.2.2 There is no perceived negative effect on deaf and hearing impaired children or their families.

4.2.3 There are no equality implications for staff. The specialist staff deployed in resourced provisions for deaf and hearing impaired children in Leeds are employed directly by the Sensory Service within Complex Needs. Staff move between one area of the service and another to meet children's needs. There will be no enforced staffing changes emanating from this proposal

4.3 **Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 The proposal will contribute to the objectives of the Children and Young People's Plan. It is expected that it will improve outcomes for this vulnerable group of children by raising their attainment and enjoyment, and promoting their social and emotional well being.

4.3.2 This proposal listens to the voices of children and their families who have expressed a desire to move the provision and to have a school which feeds into Allerton Grange High School. In doing this and in promoting the well being of deaf children it contributes to the City Council's aspiration to be a Child Friendly City

4.4 **Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The capital cost of the new provision will be established as an outcome of the feasibility study to be commissioned via the Council's JVC partner, Norfolk Property Services.

4.4.2 At this stage the advice from Built Environment officers is to seek to allocate £300k to the project. This would be an allocation not a budget, as fluctuations would be expected between now and the signing of a contract.

4.4.3 There are no costs involved in the closure of the provision at Cottingley

4.4.4 There will be no additional revenue costs resulting from this proposal. Staffing of the provision is provided by the Sensory Service from its budget regardless of the location, and staffing levels within the service will be unaffected by the proposal.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 The proposal constitutes a prescribed change under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006). The consultation process will be managed in accordance with that legislation, and local practice.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The greatest risk to the City would occur if there is no viable primary resourced provision for deaf and hearing impaired children for a prolonged length of time i.e. if there is significant delay in relocating the provision. This would likely have a negative impact on outcomes for some deaf and hearing impaired children who would not receive suitable provision. It would also likely result in more expensive placements being made at greater cost to the LA. Parents have statutory rights regarding the placement of children with statements and without a successful resourced provision the City Council may find itself compelled to place children in expensive out of borough provision or supporting individuals in a multiplicity of mainstream placements at great cost and reduced efficacy.
- 4.6.2 It will be important to keep parents and other stakeholders fully engaged and supportive of the relocation of the provision. Without their consent and support the new provision will not be successful. It is expected that a consultative group will be formed to assist in the development of the provision.
- 4.6.3 There will be a clear need to avoid unnecessary expenditure in developing the project. Tight management of building schedules will be required.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 There is currently no viable primary resourced provision for deaf and hearing impaired children. It is vital for the outcomes and welfare of this group that a new provision is established. The provision should be a good or outstanding school from which significant numbers of pupils transfer to Allerton Grange High School. Moor Allerton Hall Primary school has been identified as the most suitable school to host the primary provision in the future.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Executive Board approve consultation on the addition of provision at Moor Allerton Hall Primary School that is recognised by the Local Authority as reserved for pupils who are deaf and hearing impaired with effect from September 2014.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.