



REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT SERVICE

TO: INNER NORTH WEST AREA COMMITTEE

DATE: 10 DECEMBER 2009

SUBJECT: WEST PARK CENTRE

<p>Electoral Wards Affected:</p> <p>Weetwood Kirkstall</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary

The recent condition survey of the West Park Centre has identified £2.18m of required maintenance over the next 5 years, of which over £900,000 is required on urgent and essential repairs necessary over the next two years.

Education Leeds has indicated that the building is not financially sustainable for education purposes and in principle the Music Service should be relocated to better, modern facilities within the schools estate.

Consultation with existing local community organisations will commence on completion of the mapping of other local facilities. The brief for the technical feasibility study will be informed by the outcome of the analysis of need for replacement community space.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Area Committee on progress made towards addressing the concerns raised by members of the local community as to the future of the West Park Centre.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The West Park Centre closed as a high school in the early 1990s, since which time it has been retained by the former Education Department and latterly by Education Leeds for educational purposes as a base for the Schools Music Service and other education

services. It is located in the Weetwood Ward, but is very close to the border with the Kirkstall Ward and is therefore recognised as serving both communities.

- 2.2 Surplus space was made available on a temporary basis in the mid 1990s as a base for the Northern Ballet Theatre and Opera North until purpose built accommodation could be developed for them. Opera North has been relocated into refurbished facilities at the Grand Theatre and Northern Ballet Theatre will move into a state of the art facility at Quarry Hill in 2010.
- 2.3 Because of the amount of surplus space in the building Education Leeds has also made it available for private and community lettings. The planned vacation of the building by Northern Ballet prompted members of the community to send a deputation to the Council in February 2009 to seek confirmation that it would be retained as a community and cultural resource after the move.
- 2.4 On 1 April 2009 a report was submitted to Executive Board by the Chief Asset Management Officer in response to the delegation to the Council. The following recommendations were approved:
 - 2.4.1 That Executive Board notes the conclusions of this report and instructs officers to undertake, as a matter of priority, consultation with the user groups and the community organisations to determine how their needs can best be met through the efficient use of other Council assets or, if necessary, through the provision of some new facilities on or close to the West Park site for those requirements which can only be met through such localised provision.
 - 2.4.2 That Executive Board instructs officers to report back in six months time with the result of this consultation and some recommendations as to the way forward.
 - 2.4.3 That Executive Board instructs officers to undertake a technical feasibility study of the costs associated with the retention and refurbishment of all or part of the West Park Centre

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Consultation with user groups

- 3.1.1 Northern Ballet currently occupies approximately 40% of the building and the rest of the space is underutilized. Education Leeds has responsibility for the building and senior officers have taken the view that it will continue to use the facility for the Music Service while it continues to be available. However rather than invest the level of capital required to address the required level of maintenance necessary, it will take steps to relocate the service and related education activities within modern, equally good or better facilities elsewhere within its own schools portfolio when the need arises. Therefore, subject to agreement on a relocation proposal, the building only has a short term future for education purposes.

3.2 Consultation with community organizations

- 3.2.1 Mapping the availability of existing facilities for community use in the local area is close to completion as the basis for the forthcoming consultation with community organisations and subsequent analysis of the existing community use of the West Park Centre. That which is locally based will be considered in terms of the capacity of

alternative facilities or the need for new provision. This consultation will allow officers to identify the full extent of community use within the building and help to inform recommendations as to how this use can be provided in the future.

3.3 Condition Survey of the building

- 3.3.1 The building dates from 1951 and has a gross internal floor area of 7,195 m² (77,400 ft²) and its external hardstanding extends to 10,000 m². Only reactive maintenance has been carried out to the building since before its closure as a school and therefore a significant level of backlog maintenance has accumulated.
- 3.3.2 A condition survey was undertaken by external consultants in September 2009, copies of which have been circulated to Weetwood and Kirkstall Ward Members for information. This indicated an overall condition rating of B – Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration. The building requires maintenance works with a total value of £2.18m. These can be broken into three priorities:
- 3.3.3 Priority 1 – Urgent work that will prevent closure of the building and / or address immediate high risk to health and safety of the occupant and/or remedy a serious breach of legislation. The total value of priority 1 works is £201,233. The majority of this (£192,108) relates to electrical services, which needs to be carried out in the short term.
- 3.3.4 Priority 2 – Essential work required within 2 years that will prevent serious deterioration of the fabric or services and / or address a medium risk to the health and safety of the occupants and / or remedy a less serious breach of legislation. Priority 2 works total £716,452 and the major elements are £458,802 for electrical services and £244,386 for mechanical services. This means that over £900,000 needs to be committed by Education Leeds on urgent and essential maintenance within the next two years.
- 3.3.5 Priority 3 – Desirable work required within 3-5 years. The remaining £1.26m falls within Priority 3, which needs to be addressed through a planned investment programme if it is to be retained as a base for the Music Service and related school provision, which senior officers of Education Leeds indicate is financially unsustainable.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1 A corporate community asset strategy is to be considered shortly by Executive Board, the principles of which will apply if community asset transfer issues arise.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 The level of investment needed to bring the building up to standard is unsustainable from Education Leeds or Environment & Neighbourhoods budgets.

6.0 Preliminary Conclusions

- 6.1 The condition survey suggests that the existing West Park Centre building does not have a medium or long term future in terms of refurbishment. This will be tested in the feasibility study;

- 6.2 Education Leeds needs to bring forward options for the relocation of the Schools Music Service as soon as possible, together with costs involved for comparison with remaining in situ;
- 6.3 Consultation with the existing community organisations which use the centre should commence shortly to identify the scale of replacement community space needed in the locality;
- 6.4 The brief for the technical feasibility study to consider retention and refurbishment of all or part of the West Park Centre will be informed by the analysis of need for replacement community space in the locality;
- 6.5 The feasibility study will inform the need for capital and ongoing revenue funding finance can commence when conclusions have been reached on the amount and type of accommodation to be retained on site at West Park (if any).

7.0 **Recommendations**

- 7.1 That this progress report be noted

Background Papers: Condition survey

Appendices: None