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## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

**EXECUTIVE BOARD: 6 June 2007**

**SUBJECT: Primary Review: Wetherby Planning Area**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### **1 Introduction**

**1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the Executive Board of the outcome of a review of primary provision in the Wetherby Planning Area.

#### **2.0 Proposal for the Wetherby Planning Area**

**2.1** The report provides a summary of the review of primary school places that has been undertaken in the area. The main options that have been considered are:

**Option 1:** Maintain all current provision

**Option 2:** Reduce the admissions limit of Deighton Gates Primary from 60 to 45

**Option 3:** Reduce the admissions limit of Deighton Gates Primary from 60 to 30

**Option 4:** Amalgamation of Deighton Gates with Crossley Street to form a 2FE school

**Option 5:** Amalgamation of Deighton Gates with St James CE (VC) to form a 2FE school

**2.2** A reduction in provision in the area would address a projected significant surplus of places in the Wetherby area. This could also allow use of space for extended services in the area.

**2.3** A reduction by 1FE at Deighton Gates would leave insufficient flexibility in reception places for the area in the short term. It would leave insufficient capacity at Deighton Gates to meet projected demand.

**2.4** It is noted that there is a belief that mixed age classes have previously affected the popularity of Deighton Gates with parents.

**2.5** There is a desire amongst the schools to provide extended services in the area.

- 2.6 New housing presently planned in the area would typically generate 14 primary aged children, or 2 per year group.
- 2.7 The neighbouring planning area which includes Collingham is currently oversubscribed and projected to run at or slightly over capacity for this period.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the outcome of the review of provision in the Wetherby Planning Area

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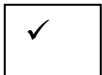
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### Electoral Wards Affected:

Wetherby



Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in

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## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the Executive Board of the outcome of a review of primary provision in the Wetherby Planning Area.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 In November 2006, a review of primary provision was initiated as a result of a request by Deighton Gates Primary School to reduce its admissions limit from 60 to 30.

2.2 There are currently surpluses in all the schools in the Wetherby area. Projections show a continued reduction in pupil numbers, resulting in surpluses for the area increasing from the current 17% to 25% by 2010.

2.3 The schools in the Wetherby area are Deighton Gates Primary, Crossley Street Primary, St James' CE Primary (VC) and St Josephs' Catholic Primary (VA).

2.4 As part of the review, informal consultation has taken place with the head teachers and chairs of governors of each of the schools, officers within

Education Leeds and Leeds City Council, and elected members in the Wetherby Ward.

### **3.0 MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1** The purpose of any review of provision is to ensure that all schools are thriving and sustainable and that school buildings provide an inspiring environment in which to learn. A comprehensive analysis of surplus places, admission numbers, accommodation needs, standards and community links of schools serving the area has been undertaken to develop options for the future pattern of provision.
- 3.2** Based on the January 2007 PLASC (school census) the area currently has 17% surplus places. Reception intakes are projected to continue to decline, with a maximum intake of 108 in the next 4 years, and a total surplus of 25% by 2010.
- 3.3** Surpluses in each of the schools in Wetherby are as follows: Deighton Gates with 26%, followed by St James 11%, Crossley Street 10% and St Joseph's Catholic (VA) 21%.
- 3.4** Intakes at Deighton Gates are projected at between 31 and 38 over the next 4 years.
- 3.5** St James' CE (VC) is a small school and is vulnerable, with 107 currently on roll, projected to fall to 97 by 2010.
- 3.6** It is noted that there is a belief that mixed age classes have previously affected the popularity of Deighton Gates with parents. This has been experienced against a background of falling rolls and is difficult to substantiate.
- 3.7** Deighton Gates is keen to use surplus accommodation to provide extended services, which has the support of the other primary schools in the area.
- 3.8** New housing planned in the area would typically generate 14 primary aged children, or 2 per year group.
- 3.9** The neighbouring planning area which contains Collingham is currently oversubscribed and projected to run at or slightly over capacity for this period.
- 3.10 Options for the future pattern of provision in the Wetherby area**
- 3.11** It is important that any proposals to change provision consider the geographical location of schools in the context of housing development plans and potential future demographic demand. Five options and variations have been suggested during informal consultation with key stakeholders and these are presented here with a brief comment on each option.
- 3.12 Option 1: Maintain all current provision**
- 3.13** This option maintains parental choice with regards to both number and type of schools in the area, and ensures no disruption to pupils and staff. It does not address the surplus provision in the area. In the longer term concerns remain over the sustainability of St James CE (VC) and potential budget issues at Deighton Gates. This option is also less flexible in allowing for alternative uses of the space for extended services in the short term.

- 3.14 Option 2:** Reduce the admissions limit of Deighton Gates Primary from 60 to 45
- 3.15** This option maintains parental choice in the area with regard to the number and type of schools. Providing accommodation can be released, it reduces the area surplus to 14% in 2010 and Deighton Gates surplus to 17%, whilst maintaining some flexibility to manage future population changes. It secures provision for all children wishing to attend school in Wetherby. It provides the opportunity to establish the detailed needs for extended services in the area prior to committing physical space for them, whilst allowing short term leases for such alternative use in the interim. This option could potentially lead to mixed age classes which may be perceived in a less favourable light by parents. Without releasing the additional accommodation it make little difference to surplus places and would have the same effect as leaving the admissions limit at 60.
- 3.16 Option 3:** Reduce the admissions limit of Deighton Gates Primary from 60 to 30
- 3.17** Leaves insufficient reception places at Deighton Gates to meet demand. Leaves little short term flexibility in reception places for the total area with just 2 spare places projected in 2008, rising to 18 (16%) in 2010. This could lead to increased demand for St James', thereby increasing their sustainability. Alternatively parents may not wish to choose a CE school but be unable to secure a place elsewhere in Wetherby. Current information on September 2007 allocations shows 39 children have been allocated to Deighton Gates, 4 of whom live outside Leeds, 2 live inside Leeds but outside the Wetherby area. Given Crossley Street has a full allocation of 30 pupils, had the admissions limit at Deighton Gates been 30 then 3 Wetherby children would have been placed in St James'. This option would allow for alternative uses of the accommodation.
- 3.18 Option 4:** Amalgamation of Deighton Gates with Crossley Street to form a 2FE school.
- 3.19** Has broadly the same effect as option 3 in terms of managing surplus space and alternative uses of the site. Reduces parental choice even further, and introduces disruption to pupils and staff. Crossley Street is currently a viable school.
- 3.20 Option 5:** Amalgamation of Deighton Gates with St James CE (VC) to form a 2FE school.
- 3.21** Reduce surplus space in broadly similar terms to option 2. Reduces parental choice, and could potentially remove CE provision in the area dependent on the status of the new school. Disruption would be caused to pupils and staff. Amalgamation at the Deighton Gates site would remove provision from the most disadvantaged area of Wetherby.
- 3.22 Preferred Option**
- 3.23** The preferred option, Option 1, is to maintain current provision as Education Leeds believes there is inconclusive evidence at this time to recommend any change in provision. As part of this option we would continue to monitor the situation closely to understand whether there is a need to reduce capacity in the area at a future date.

**3.24** Reducing the admissions limit for Deighton Gates to 45 provides the greatest flexibility and minimal disruption whilst meeting projected demand levels and maintaining choice. It provides for the extended services offer to be developed by using the space released, without making any irreversible changes to the school estate.

**3.25** Deighton Gates' concerns over parental preferencing for single age groups are acknowledged and this needs to be monitored. However reducing to 30 at this time would impact on choice in the area, and leave very little flexibility in provision in the short term. It would also leave insufficient places at Deighton Gates to meet projected demand.

## **4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

**4.1** Planning primary school places is relevant to a number of key priorities identified in the Children and Young People's Plan, the Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Plan, in terms of managing the supply and demand of school places and school improvement. It is also relevant to the Closing the Gap agenda, with the planning of school places taking consideration of wider socio-economic factors and regeneration.

## **5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The review of primary provision fulfils the LEA's statutory requirement to keep under review the supply and demand of school places.

**5.2** There are no immediate financial implications.

### **5.3 Indicative Timescale**

**5.4** Education Leeds' preferred option at this stage is to maintain the current provision and to closely monitor pupil numbers in the area. Therefore there is no specific timescale linked to this report. Any future recommendations in this area will be made following further consultation, and will be dependant on the review of the 2008 data. This includes PLASC 2008 and the allocation of primary places for September 2008 which will be published in March 2008. As a result of this timetable, the earliest date for implementation of any recommendations for change would be September 2010.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

**6.1** A review of pupil places was undertaken in the Wetherby area following a request by Deighton Gates Primary School to reduce its admissions limit from 60 to 30.

**6.2** There is no conclusive evidence to support any change in provision currently.

**6.3** There is a need to monitor the situation ongoing.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** Members are asked to note the outcome of the review of primary provision in the Wetherby Planning Area.