



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Originator: Alison Pickering
Helen Steele

Tel: 2145867

One appendices is included in this report which is not for publication under the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4 (3)

Report of the Directors of Environment and Neighbourhoods and Children's Services

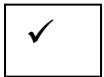
Executive Board

Date: 22 August 2007

Subject: Proposals for the Fir Tree Primary School Site

Electoral Wards Affected:

Alwoodley



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

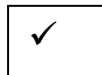
Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

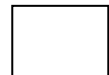
Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In



Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides an initial response to the deputation made by Lingfield and Fir Trees Residents Group to retain the premises for community purposes following the decision to close Fir Tree Primary School. The report highlights that the site is to be retained by Education Leeds until summer 2010 for other educational uses. It is therefore recommended that officers, through the Moor Allerton Partnership, lead a programme of public consultation on the future needs of the area for community facilities and support the continuation of those community activities currently being delivered at Fir Tree Primary School.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide an initial response to the deputation made by Lingfield and Fir Trees Residents Group to full Council in June 2007 following the decision to close Fir Tree Primary School and to recommend that further work is done to identify the most appropriate way to meet community needs.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Fir Tree Primary School and Archbishop Cranmer C of E Primary School will close in August 2007 as a result of the review of pupil provision in the Alwoodley Planning Area and will be replaced by a new school called Allerton Church of England Primary School on the present Archbishop Cranmer site.
- 2.2 Public consultation was undertaken by Education Leeds as part of the review of pupil provision in the Alwoodley Planning Area on their proposal to close Fir Tree and Archbishop Cranmer CE (VA) primary schools in August 2007 and establish a 1.5 FE school on the Archbishop Cranmer site in September 2007.
- 2.3 In response to this, the North East Outer Area Committee supported the views of the Alwoodley Members that, if Fir Tree Primary School is closed, the premises should be retained for community use. The Moor Allerton Partnership expressed their support for the need to maintain existing community service provision and activities, including sports facilities, at Fir Tree Primary School.
- 2.4 The full Council meeting held on 20th June 2007, received a deputation from the Lingfields and Fir Trees Residents Group. The deputation to council was signed by over 680 residents and calls for a Sure Start centre, a youth centre with outdoor space for recreational activities, a One Stop centre and a community centre. The deputation stressed that it was vital for the whole community that the Fir Tree Primary School building and its playing field are retained for community use.
- 2.5 Although the Fir Tree Primary School will close in August 2007 and Allerton C of E Primary School will open in September, Education Leeds still have need for use of the school until summer 2010.
- 2.6 The Moor Allerton area was identified by the North East District Partnership as a priority neighbourhood in order to 'narrow the gap'. In response to this the Moor Allerton Partnership (MAP) was established in May 2006, with the support of the North East Outer Area Committee. The Partnership is made up of local service providers together with the voluntary and community sector. The MAP partnership has already done much work with local residents to establish the regeneration priorities for the area and to identify the extent of existing community provision.

3.0 Main Points

- 3.1 Subsequent to the deputation to Council it has now become clear that Education Leeds need to retain the Fir Tree site until summer 2010, therefore enabling a programme of public consultation and partner agency work to be undertaken to consider the future use of this site. In the immediate short term the North East

Area Management Team, through MAP, will seek to ensure there is continuation of the community activities and provision currently being accommodated at Fir Tree School.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

4.1 There are no implications at this stage, as a consequence of this report.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 Fir Tree Primary School has been injected into the Capital Receipts Programme at a value detailed in the confidential Appendix 1. Confidentiality is maintained as, under the Council's Access to Information Procedures Rules, disclosure of the valuation may be prejudicial to the return that the Council might realise on a future sale of the site. However, following the requirement for ongoing educational use of the site, any sale could not take place before summer 2010 and capital receipt projections will need to be adjusted to reflect this change. Should the Council determine that it wishes to retain all or part of the facility for community use, this will have an impact on the available capital receipt. Subject to the outcome of any detailed proposals, funding may have to be identified for any works required to remodel the school building so that it is suitable for community use.

6.0 The Way Forward

6.1 The closure of the Fir Tree Primary School raises questions about the potential loss of community facilities, and the ability of remaining facilities to address community needs, on the Fir Tree and Lingfield estates. Consequently, it is proposed that Area Management Team officers work with partner agencies through MAP to lead on the following:

- a programme of public consultation and partner agency work to consider the future needs of the area for community activities, provision and facilities; and
- work to facilitate the continuation of the community activities and provision currently being accommodated at Fir Tree School.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Based on the deputation to full Council and in light of ward Member views, it is apparent that there is a body of opinion that some or all of Fir Tree Primary School should be retained for community use. However, in light of Education Leeds ongoing requirements for the building, there can be no new community facilities developed on the site before 2010. It is therefore proposed that the Council uses this time to consider in greater detail the future need for community activities, provision and facilities in this area.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the following recommendations:

8.2 That the North East Area Management Team work with partner agencies, through MAP, to lead on:

- a programme of public consultation and partner agency work to consider the future needs of the area for community activities, provision and facilities; and

- work to facilitate the continuation of the community activities and provision currently being accommodated at Fir Tree School.