

**Report of Director of Children and Families**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**Subject: Outcome of consultation to increase learning places at Allerton Church of England Primary School**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Alwoodley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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**

This report contains details of proposals brought forward to meet the local authority's duty to ensure sufficiency of school places. The changes that are proposed form prescribed alterations under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and accompanying statutory guidance set out the process which must be followed when making such changes. The statutory process to make these changes varies according to the nature of the change and status of the school and the process followed in respect of these proposals is detailed in this report.

The decision maker in these cases remains the local authority.

**Recommendations**

Executive Board is asked to:

- Approve the publication of a Statutory Notice on a proposal to expand primary provision at Allerton Church of England Primary School from a capacity of 420 pupils to 630 pupils with an increase in the admission number from 60 to 90 with effect from September 2018.
- Note the responsible officer for implementation is the Head of Learning Systems.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report contains details of proposals brought forward to meet the Local Authority's duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places, which support the achievement of the Best Council priority to improve educational achievement and close achievement gaps. This report describes the outcome of the consultation regarding proposals to expand primary school provision at Allerton Church of England (C of E) Primary School and seeks permission to publish a statutory notice in respect of these proposals.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds City Council has permanently increased primary places across the Alwoodley and Roundhay areas over a number of years and more recently bulge cohorts, (where a school admits children above its published admission number as a temporary increase) have been agreed at a number of local schools to address the ongoing demand for places.
- 2.2 A review of births and children aged under 5 based on NHS data, as well as admissions data spanning the last few years, has highlighted the need for additional primary school provision in the Alwoodley area. The number of children living nearest to Allerton C of E Primary School and Alwoodley Primary School outweighs the number of available places for the foreseeable future, and over the past few years there has been an additional pressure on available places for children living in the east of the area. In addition the Governing Body of Brodetsky Jewish Primary School, as its own admitting authority, recently ran a public consultation to reduce its Published Admission Number from 45 to 30. The LA did not support this change however this will take effect from 2018.
- 2.3 By September 2017, Allerton C of E Primary School will have admitted additional children above its published admission number into its Reception class on three separate occasions. These bulge cohorts were supported by the Head Teacher and Governing Body and as the Local Authority (LA) admitted these bulge cohorts and provided physical accommodation, it was appropriate for the LA to consult on whether this should become a permanent change, as the statutory guidance from the Department for Education recommends.
- 2.4 For these reasons, a consultation on the permanent expansion of Allerton C of E Primary School took place from 26 June to 21 July 2017 to understand the views of parents, local residents and other stakeholders. This included use of the WordPress on-line forum and the Council's on-line survey system. A number of drop-in sessions were held at the school to discuss the proposals and were attended by parents, carers, school staff, local residents and a local councillor. Information was distributed widely including; via the school website and newsletter, to other local schools, via local Early Years providers, on the Leeds City Council website, the Family Information Service website, Twitter and Facebook. Meetings were held with the governors, staff and school council of Allerton C of E Primary School. Banners were placed at the entrance to the school to advertise the consultation and leaflets highlighting the consultation, and the timings of the consultation drop-in meetings were distributed to 854 local dwellings. A local community centre was also asked to promote the consultation.

### 3 **Main issues**

- 3.1 The expansion of Allerton C of E Primary School is proposed as it is a good school (Ofsted January 17) and was judged to be Outstanding in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMs) report (January 17). The school is popular with local families, situated within an area of high demographic need. The school has been willing to work with the authority to ensure a sufficiency of places by supporting bulge cohorts in 2014, 2016 and 2017 and has worked hard to improve its offer to local parents, including developing provision for 2 year olds and offering 30 hours of early years care for parents who work - to be implemented from September 2017.
- 3.2 The Governors and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are confident that its dedicated staff team can meet the needs of every child who attends the school. The leadership team will continue to rigorously monitor the progress of children; ensuring high standards of teaching and learning are consistently delivered as children progress through each phase of school. The school is part of Noctua Teaching School Alliance, and its experienced middle and senior leaders are committed to improving outcomes for children in the school, but also share their skills and knowledge with colleagues in other schools through the Senior Leadership programme. The school welcomes the opportunity to enable more children to benefit from its commitment to developing respect, caring, tolerance, kindness, honesty and openness.
- 3.3 The LA recognises that the current infrastructure/school building cannot accommodate a permanent expansion to 3 forms of entry (FE) and that changes/additions to the building will have to happen if this proposal progresses. Initial work suggests that a number of options are possible and a detailed design for the new building would need to be developed.
- 3.4 The LA acknowledges that there are some concerns relating to an increase in traffic in the area due to existing traffic issues and we will work with colleagues in Highways Services to look at ways of managing this where appropriate. Highways would take account of the existing bulge cohorts in terms of assessing the highway impact. If the proposals were taken forward a full traffic survey and transport statement would need to be produced for any planning application which would need to demonstrate how the increases to traffic could be mitigated and which would include a consideration of these and any other potential solutions for helping to manage the increases to traffic and congestion.
- 3.5 During the consultation there were 92 responses received via paper form, email and on-line survey. Leaflets advertising the consultation were distributed to over 850 local dwellings. 34 respondents supported the proposal to increase the number of school places, 22 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal and 36 respondents disagreed with the proposal. A total of 255 comments were made about various considerations including highways issues, location and sufficiency of places, environment and site considerations, impact on school operation. A summary of comments made and concerns raised is below. A copy of the anonymised responses received can be requested from the Sufficiency and Participation Team at [educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk).

3.5.1 Summary of the main themes/comments from those in support:

- **Location/Sufficiency** - will help to address a lack of school places in the area and generally across North Leeds Alwoodley/Roundhay;
- **Environment/site considerations** - school has enough space to expand / will not impact on green space;
- **Impact on school operation** - size of hall and impact on facilities would need to be reviewed as some felt that there could be a detrimental impact on lunch, play and after school arrangements; concern about impact on teaching and learning if numbers increased; whether the school would be able to meet the demand for extra-curricular and out of school places; possible negative impact on teaching and learning;
- **Highways** - concerns raised about increases in traffic, congestion, safety, inconsiderate parking, anti-social behaviour, general infrastructure and impact on access to the school and local roads.

3.5.2 Summary of the main themes/comments from those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal:

- **Impact on school operation** - expanding school removes year on year uncertainty and will allow school to effectively plan ahead; size of hall and impact on facilities would need to be reviewed as some felt that there could be a detrimental impact on lunch, play and after school arrangements; whether school would be able to meet demand for extra-curricular and out of school places; school may feel more impersonal if expanded; would provide children with better opportunities for activities within school e.g.sports if expanded; Allerton C of E has performed well with bulge cohorts and could manage an expansion;
- **Highways** - concerns raised about increases in traffic, congestion, safety, inconsiderate parking, anti-social behaviour, general infrastructure and impact on access to the school and local roads.

3.5.3 Summary of the main themes/comments from those who disagreed with the proposal:

- **Location/Sufficiency** - concern that other schools are not being considered for expansion; concern that public money is being spent when there are places available at other local schools;
- **Environment/site considerations** - concern about loss of green space / play space due to additional buildings; concern that site is not big enough for expansion; concern about increase in air pollution due to increase in traffic; building work will disrupt local residents;
- **Impact on school operation** - size of hall and impact on facilities would need to be reviewed as some felt that there could be a detrimental impact on lunch, play and after school arrangements; concern that additional children may mean that safety in school is compromised on a daily basis; concern around disruption to the school and the day to day running; whether school would be able to meet demand for extra-curricular and out of school places; school may feel more impersonal if expanded; concern about impact on teaching and learning if numbers increased;

- **Highways** - concerns raised about increases in traffic, congestion, safety, inconsiderate parking, anti-social behaviour, general infrastructure and impact on access to the school and local roads.

3.6 The main concerns raised by respondents and a response to those concerns are summarised as follows;

3.6.1 **Concerns about location and sufficiency:** That other local schools are not being considered for expansion and/or that public money may be spent on expanding Allerton C of E when there are places available at other local schools.

**Response:** The number of children living nearest to Allerton C of E Primary School and Alwoodley Primary School outweighs the number of available places for the foreseeable future, and over the past few years there has been additional pressure on available places for children living in the east of the area. Other schools within the area have been considered for a permanent expansion however due to site, highways and locality issues have been ruled out at this time. It is acknowledged that there may be places available in other local schools in future years, however Allerton C of E has admitted three bulge cohorts in recent years which has resulted in the provision of additional physical accommodation. As such it was appropriate for us to consult on whether this should become a permanent change, as the statutory guidance from the Department for Education recommends. It is also important to recognise that the council has a duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to secure diversity in the provision of schools and increase opportunities for parental choice. Alwoodley has a range of existing types of provision (Community, C of E, Catholic, Jewish, Sikh Ethos) and although Allerton is a church school it is voluntary controlled and therefore does not admit children under a faith priority.

3.6.2 **Concerns about environment and site issues:** That there may be a loss of green space/play space due to additional buildings; that building work will disrupt local residents; whether the site is big enough for a permanent expansion.

**Response:** An accommodation solution has not yet been determined. A detailed design for any new building would need to be developed and would be sited as close to the existing school as possible. We would consult with colleagues in planning and from Sport England to ensure the optimum location was chosen for the expansion to ensure that any loss of green space was minimised and to minimise any impact on the site. One of the roles of planning is to review the proximity of any proposed school extension in relation to surrounding properties to take into account impact on residents. The expansion of the school would involve extensive building work and wherever possible extremely disruptive work would be carried out in school holidays or out of hours. Delivery times would be managed to avoid conflict at the beginning and end of the school day and we would seek to ensure that the work is phased to minimise the impact on both pupils, staff and local residents. Working hours would be subject to planning conditions. The overall site has been reviewed in accordance with school design guidance and is deemed to be large enough to accommodate a 3FE expansion.

3.6.3 **Concerns about impact on school operation:** That the size of hall and impact on facilities would need to be reviewed as some felt that there could be a detrimental impact on lunch, play and after school arrangements; that additional children may mean that safety in school is compromised on a daily basis; that the school may feel more impersonal if expanded; impact on teaching and learning if numbers increased; disruption to the school and the day to day running.

**Response:** Additional classrooms and indoor spaces created would need to conform to minimum building requirements. As part of the design phase requirements for all internal facilities such as toilets, library, hall and kitchen requirements would be assessed and where necessary improvements or additions made in line with school design guidance. The school has continued to expand and improve the buildings since 2007, with successful building projects every year and any building work carried out while the school is open would be completely segregated from the pupils and staff to ensure safety, and that disruption to teaching and learning would be minimised. The headteacher and SLT would determine how after school clubs and wrap around care would operate as well as ensuring lunch times are managed appropriately as they currently do.

We understand that some parents have concerns about how the 'feel' of the school might change and how the school would ensure that teaching and learning wasn't impacted by the increase to numbers. The leadership team will continue to rigorously monitor the progress of children, ensuring high standards of teaching and learning are consistently delivered as children progress through each phase of school and welcomes the opportunity to enable more children to benefit from its commitment to developing respect, caring, tolerance, kindness, honesty and openness. The school admitted bulge cohorts in 2014 and 2016 and went on to be judged as a Good school (Ofsted January 17) and an Outstanding school (SIAMs January 17). The Governing Body is confident in the school and the ability of the staff to manage this change.

3.6.4 **Concerns about Highways issues:** Impact of increases in traffic and congestion; safety of children; inconsiderate parking; anti-social behaviour; general infrastructure issues and impact on access to the school and local roads.

**Response:** As noted earlier in the report, the LA acknowledges the concerns relating to an increase in traffic in the area due to existing traffic issues and we will work with colleagues in Highways Services to look at ways of managing this where appropriate. Highways would take account of the existing bulge cohorts in terms of assessing the highway impact. During the consultation a number of suggestions were made regarding how increases to traffic could be managed which included:

A review of the current park and ride arrangement off King Lane and potential to create a formal pedestrian walk-through from the park and ride onto Lingfield Approach;

Further use of double yellow lines near to the school;

Assessment of the traffic verges on Lingfield Approach and Lingfield Drive and potential to create parking/drop off;

A review of the current bus routes/times at pick up/drop off;

Potential for making the gate at the back of school more accessible to create an additional entrance to school;

If the proposals were taken forward a full traffic survey and transport statement would need to be produced for any planning application which would need to demonstrate how the increases to traffic could be mitigated and which would include a consideration of these and any other potential solutions for helping to manage the increases to traffic and congestion. Parents and local residents would have the opportunity to formally comment on any planning applications.

3.6.5 **Concerns about the consultation:** That the consultation document lacks detail/contingency, that the consultation was poorly promoted and a tick box exercise.

**Response:** The consultation document seeks to highlight the main reasons for consulting on a permanent increase to Allerton Church of England Primary School within context. It is accepted that the document could have included more detail about contingency plans should the proposed expansion not progress and we will seek to ensure that future consultations include this detail. That said we do not believe that this level of detail would have materially altered the consultation or its outcomes since the focus of the consultation was whether we expand the school permanently after having offered bulge cohorts on 3 separate occasions.

The consultation was carried out over four week period and included a number of drop-in sessions held at different times and information was distributed widely, including via the school website and newsletter, to other local schools, via local Early Years providers, on the Leeds City Council website, the Family Information Service website, Twitter and Facebook. Banners were placed at the entrance to the school to advertise the consultation and leaflets highlighting the consultation, and the timings of the consultation drop-in meetings were distributed to 854 local dwellings. A local community centre was also asked to promote the consultation.

The LA takes seriously its duties to engage with the people and communities most affected by its proposals which is why, although not a statutory requirement, we ran a consultation at this stage.

3.7 As part of the consultation council officers met with the Governing Body (GB) and a formal response to the consultation was received. The GB noted that it is 'confident in the schools and ability of the staff to manage this change while maintaining our already excellent teaching standards' and that it supports the expansion with the following considerations:

The GB is aware of the concerns from staff and parents and that increasing the school may result in a loss of a 'local family feel' but is aware of the need to balance this with supporting the need to provide additional places;

The GB has agreed to bulge cohorts on three separate occasions and has had to manage staffing and the school leadership team and a permanent expansion would help it to forward plan in a more managed way;

The GB is concerned about the impact of additional traffic and how this might be managed and would like the LA to address this as a serious concern;

The GB and staff have worked hard 'to create a safe, welcoming and productive environment' and would want to retain the café, art studio and nurture space and wish the size of the hall to be reviewed as part of a building solution in line with outcomes outlined in the School Development Plan.

If the proposals were to proceed the LA would work closely with the GB and leadership team throughout project delivery to ensure that the school is fully involved in all aspects of the expansion. This process covers all aspects of constructing the new accommodation, including the design of the proposal and how construction is managed in a 'live' school environment. The school leadership team will be an active participant in this process throughout the project lifecycle.

- 3.8 As part of the consultation council officers met with the School Council (SC) to discuss the proposals and 21 responses were submitted by SC on behalf of students (not included in the tally of responses above). Four responses were in support, 9 responses were not sure and 9 responses were not in support. The main themes raised in the responses and at the meeting were as follows:

There would be more opportunity to make more friends and learn more languages; PE times might be shorter; Would there be enough space at lunchtimes and play times and would the school feel too crowded? Would lunch times have to be split further? Concern that traffic problems would be worse due to more cars; Concern that the school would need more teaching staff and whether they would be as nice as the staff currently at the school, or stricter; Would the school be able to afford additional equipment and electricity? Are the school grounds large enough to make the school bigger? Would the hall be big enough for assemblies; More children might make it more difficult to go to church and we might need more coaches for trips.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The process in respect of all the proposals has been managed in accordance with the relevant legislation and with local good practice.

- 4.1.2 The consultation was carried out over four week period and included use of the WordPress on-line forum and the Council's on-line survey system. A number of drop-in sessions were held at the school supported by officers from Highways, Children and Families Service and the Built Environment Teams, to discuss the proposals. These were attended by parents, carers, school staff, local residents and one of the local councillors. Information was distributed widely, including via the school website and newsletter, to other local schools, via local Early Years

providers, on the Leeds City Council website, the Family Information Service website, Twitter and Facebook. Meetings were held with the governors, staff and school council of Allerton C of E Primary School. Banners were placed at the entrance to the school to advertise the consultation and leaflets highlighting the consultation, and the timings of the consultation drop-in meetings were distributed to 854 local dwellings. A local community centre was also asked to promote the consultation.

4.1.3 The view of local ward members was sought and there was broad support for the expansion of Allerton C of E Primary School provided that the Highways and parking issues are addressed. A response to the Highways issues is detailed earlier in this report.

4.1.4 The consultation document for this proposal can be found at: <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Currentconsultation.aspx> or requested from the Sufficiency and Participation Team at: [educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk).

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

4.2.1 The EDCI screening form for the proposals at Allerton C of E Primary School has been completed and is attached as an appendix to this report.

## 4.3 **Council policies and Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 This proposal offers good value for money through its capacity to support achievement of the Best Council outcome to give everyone the chance to do well at every level of learning, gaining the skills they need for life.

4.3.2 This proposal is being brought forward to meet the LA's statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for all the children in Leeds. Providing places close to where children live allows improved accessibility to local and desirable school places, is an efficient use of resources and reduces the risk of non-attendance.

4.3.3 This proposal contributes to the city's aspiration to be the best council, the best city in which to grow up and a child friendly city. The delivery of pupil places through the Learning Places Programme is one of the baseline entitlements of a child friendly city. By creating good quality local school places we can support the priority aim of improving educational achievement and closing achievement gaps. In turn, by providing young people with the skills they need for life, these proposals provide underlying support for the council's ambition to produce a strong economy by compassionate means. A good quality school place also contributes towards delivery of targets within the Children and Young People's Plan such as our obsession to improve behaviour, attendance and achievement. It is important when bringing any proposal forward that there is a degree of certainty that any change would not have a negative impact on teaching and learning. Allerton C of E Primary School was rated Good in its January 2017 Ofsted inspection and was judged to be Outstanding in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMs) report in January 2017. The GB believes that it can manage the change whilst maintaining standards.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 Cautious indicative budgets, based on high-level calculations, are estimated at £3,882,616.93 for the proposed expansion of Allerton C of E Primary School. The proposed scheme would be subject to planning permission which would need to be granted prior to the commencement of construction works. Once the feasibility stage was complete and schemes proceeded to the detailed design phase, budgets would be realigned to reflect that all parties have agreed the final design and cost estimates, which would take account of site investigations and survey information, in accordance with standard project and risk management principles. Schemes would also be subject to relevant stakeholder consultation.

4.4.2 This expansion would be funded from the Learning Places Programme through Basic Need Allocations. The precise funding packages would be confirmed at the design freeze stage, and detailed in the relevant Design and Cost reports.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 The processes that have been and will be followed are in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, and amended by School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

4.5.2 This report is subject to call in.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 The proposal to increase primary provision in the Alwoodley area has been brought forward in time to allow places to be delivered for 2018. A decision not to proceed at this stage may result in a fresh consultation on new proposals, and places may not be delivered in time. It may also result in further bulge cohorts being delivered in other local schools which would be more costly in the longer term. The LA's ability to meet its statutory duty for sufficiency of school places in the short term may be at risk.

4.6.2 A majority of the school site is protected playing pitches. Early consultation with Sport England would be required to obtain approval to build on the existing playing pitches in order for the proposed expansion to progress.

4.6.3 There is also a corporate risk associated with failing to provide sufficient school places in good quality buildings that meet the needs of local communities.

#### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 Our ambition is to be the best city in the country. As a vibrant and successful city we will attract new families to Leeds, and making sure that we have enough school places for children is one of our top priorities. These proposals have been brought forward to meet that need, and following the appropriate consultation we now seek to move them to the next stage. They would ensure that children in

Leeds would have the best possible start to their learning, and so deliver our vision of Leeds as a child friendly city.

- 5.2 Although there were slightly fewer respondents who supported the proposal than those who did not support it, a majority of those respondents were concerned about the impact of additional traffic in the area. It is our view that the risk of not providing the additional places in an area of such high need outweighs the concerns relating to the traffic and highways issues. We acknowledge that there are limited options for managing the increases in traffic but that there may be some scope to introduce measures in mitigation as detailed earlier in this report. The proposal therefore remains strong and addresses the LA's statutory duty to provide sufficient primary places and to provide places close to where children live, allow improved accessibility to local and desirable school places, manage resources effectively and to reduce the risk of non-attendance.

## 6 **Recommendations**

### 6.1 Executive Board is asked to:

- Approve the publication of a Statutory Notice on a proposal to expand primary provision at Allerton Church of England Primary School from a capacity of 420 pupils to 630 pupils with an increase in the admission number from 60 to 90 with effect from September 2018.
- Note the responsible officer for implementation is the Head of Learning Systems.

## 7 **Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

### 7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.