



Agenda Item:

Originator: Dirk Gilleard
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REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 6 January 2010

SUBJECT: The future of Primrose, City of Leeds, Parklands Girls' High Schools, and of girls only secondary education in Leeds.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to formally consult on proposals to i) close Primrose High School, to be replaced by an academy sponsored by the Co-operative Group, with Leeds City College as the education partner, on the same site, ii) close City of Leeds High School, and iii) close Parklands Girls' High School to be replaced by a co-educational academy sponsored by the Edutrust Academies Charitable Trust (EACT) on the same site. The report also seeks approval for a city wide consultation on the future of girls only secondary education in Leeds.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2 In 2008, the Government launched the National Challenge for every secondary school to have at least 30% of their young people achieve five good GCSEs including English and Maths. In Leeds, three schools have been identified as requiring structural solutions to respond to this challenge.
- 3 At its meeting on 14th October, Executive Board considered the latest of a series of reports on the local authority's response to the Government's National Challenge. The Board agreed to consult formally on:-
 - the closure of City of Leeds, Primrose and Parklands High Schools;
 - establishing a new co-educational Academy in east Leeds on the Parklands site by 2011;
 - establishing a 14-19 hub on the City of Leeds site by 2011;
 - establishing an Academy on the Primrose site by 2011

- 4 This report restates the case for each school and presents the formal consultation documents required, if the board agree, to proceed to formal consultation on the three schools.
- 5 The proposal on the future of Parklands Girls High School has the potential to limit parental choice through the removal of the city's ability to provide girl's only secondary education provision for those parents who wish this for their daughter. In order to assess the strength of public opinion on the implications of this in Leeds it is proposed that there is a parallel city wide consultation on the council's policy of retaining girls only secondary education in Leeds.
- 6 The nature of the consultation on the 14-19 hub is different. Work is on-going to consider with schools, colleges and other partners in the city the nature of the 14 – 19 hub. A series of workshops and consultations have commenced this term to develop a more detailed proposal. The strands being considered include: curriculum, governance, workforce and sustainability. The consultation on the closure of the City of Leeds high school will provide opportunities for respondents to comment o the use of the site for educational provision should the school close. There will be separate consultations on the 14-19 hub and this will be the subject of a separate report to the Executive Board before Easter 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7 Members are asked to:
 - i) approve moving to formal consultation on a proposal to close Primrose High School in August 2011, and that a new 11-18 Academy, sponsored by the Co-operative Group with Leeds City College as education partner, open on the site in September 2011;
 - iii) approve moving to formal consultation on a proposal to close City of Leeds High School and the future use of the site for educational provision;
 - iii) approve moving to formal consultation on a proposal to close Parklands Girls High School in August 2011, and that a new co-educational 11-18 Academy, sponsored by the Edutrust Academies Charitable Trust (EACT), open on the site in September 2011;
 - iv) approve a city wide consultation on the future of girls only secondary education in Leeds;
 - v) note that a further report will be submitted in April 2010 that will explain the outcome of these consultations and enable Members to decide how to take these proposals forward.



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SUBJECT: The future of Primrose, City of Leeds, Parklands Girls' High Schools, and of girls only secondary education in Leeds.

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in
(Details contained in the Report)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to formally consult on proposals to i) close Primrose High School, to be replaced by an academy sponsored by the Co-operative Group, with the Leeds City College as education partner, on the same site, ii) close City of Leeds High School, and iii) close Parklands Girls' High School to be replaced by a co-educational academy sponsored by the Edutrust Academies Charitable Trust (EACT) on the same site. The report also seeks approval for a city wide consultation on the future of girls only secondary education in Leeds.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In 2008, the Government launched the National Challenge. This means that the minimum standard expected of every secondary school is that 30% of their young

people achieve five good GCSEs including English and Maths.

- 2.2 At its meeting on 14th October, Executive Board considered the latest of a series of reports on the local authority's response to the National Challenge. This report emphasised the need to identify deliverable solutions as a matter of urgency if this complex and challenging agenda is to be taken forward successfully. The Board agreed to consult formally on:-
- the closure of City of Leeds, Primrose and Parklands High Schools;
 - establishing a new co-educational Academy in east Leeds on the Parklands site by 2011;
 - establishing a 14-19 hub on the City of Leeds site by 2011;
 - establishing an Academy on the Primrose site by 2011
- 2.3 The proposal on the future of Parklands Girls High School has the potential to limit parental choice through the removal of the city's ability to provide girl's only secondary education provision for those parents who wish this for their daughter. In order to assess the strength of public opinion on the implications of this in Leeds it is proposed that there is a parallel city wide consultation on the council's policy of retaining girls only secondary education in Leeds.
- 2.4 The nature of the consultation on the 14-19 hub is different. Work is on-going to consider with schools, colleges and other partners in the city the nature of the 14 – 19 hub. A series of workshops and consultations have commenced this term to develop a more detailed proposal. The strands being considered include: curriculum, governance, workforce and sustainability. The consultation on the closure of the City of Leeds high school will provide opportunities for respondents to comment on the use of the site for educational provision should the school close. This will be the subject of a separate report to the Executive Board before Easter 2010.
- 2.5 Work has now been undertaken to identify suitable sponsors for the proposed academies, to secure expressions of interest, and to identify the required size for these institutions to meet current and future need.

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 The role of the Local Authority is changing from provider of services to the commissioner of provision to serve local communities. Academies are independent schools whose success is dependent upon the absolute responsibility given to their sponsors, their governing bodies, and their principals. They are established through an agreement between the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Local Authority, and the sponsor.
- 3.2 Education Leeds has liaised with the DCSF to identify suitable sponsors for both of the proposed academies.
- 3.3 **Primrose**
- 3.3.1 Primrose High School faces significant challenges; the standards achieved by the school are low compared with those achieved in similar schools in Leeds. This

means that not enough young people are succeeding and reaching their potential at present. At present Primrose is not enabling enough young people to achieve the five good GCSE's including English and Maths expected through the national challenge.

- 3.3.2 Education Leeds and the school have been working together and there have been improvements. However, we are not confident that the leadership; attendance; standards; achievement; and the budget: can improve quickly enough to benefit the young people in the school now and those likely to attend the academy in the future.
- 3.3.3 With the input from the Co-operative Group and Leeds City College as educational partner we are confident that all these issues will be addressed and continuous improvement will be secured. The Co-operative Group will use its cooperative structure; ethos, values & principles to engage the local communities that Primrose serves and work with other academies and sponsors to ensure the benefits of its cooperative way of working are shared. The sponsor also aims to use co-operative solutions to improve the educational attainment of the school, build community engagement, and ensure that co-operative values are embraced by every pupil for their time at school and in their adult lives. The Co-operative Group wants to develop a strong co-operative curriculum and use its values and principles to drive improvements within the school. This will lead to the organisation's eventual aim of creating a future network of all co-operative schools, colleges and academies.
- 3.3.4 The Co-operative Group have agreed to sign and abide by the Leeds Memorandum of Understanding on how academies will operate in Leeds.
- 3.3.5 A move to formally consult on a proposal to close Primrose High School and replace it by an academy sponsored by the Co-operative Group, with Leeds City College as education partner, does not require the City Council to make binding decisions on the future of Primrose High School at this stage. If through the process of consultation an alternative proposal emerges as the best solution for improving young people's outcomes in inner north east Leeds, it could still be developed. A further report will be available in April that will enable the Council to decide how to take these proposals forward.
- 3.3.6 The public consultation document is attached as Annex 1.

3.4 City of Leeds

- 3.4.1 City of Leeds High School faces significant challenges; the standards achieved by the school are very low compared with those achieved in similar schools in Leeds and nationally. This means that not enough young people are succeeding and reaching their potential at present. At present City of Leeds is not enabling enough young people to achieve the five good GCSE's including English and Maths expected through the national challenge.
- 3.4.2 The school has not been successful in attracting enough good leaders. We are not confident that the leadership; attendance; standards; achievement; and the

budget can improve quickly enough to benefit the young people in the school.

- 3.4.3 By offering places in other schools, as an alternative for the young people currently attending City of Leeds High School, we will create more viable school places that will maximise their potential. We also anticipate this being welcomed by parents. Each of these schools has strong leadership capacity and can point to recent improvements in young people's attendance, standards, and achievement.
- 3.4.4 Work is on-going with schools and colleges across Leeds to consider the nature of vocational provision for 14 to 19 year olds that might continue to make use of the City of Leeds site as a place for learning, that is, as a 14-19 hub. This will be the subject of a separate report to the Executive Board.
- 3.4.5 A move to formally consult on a proposal to close City of Leeds High School does not require the City Council to make binding decisions on the future of the school at this stage. If through the process of consultation an alternative proposal emerges as the best solution for improving young people's outcomes in inner north west Leeds, it could still be developed. A further report will be available in April that will enable the Council to decide how to take these proposals forward.
- 3.4.6 The public consultation document is attached as Annex 2.

3.5 Parklands Girls' High School

- 3.5.1 There are 74 girls in the current year 7 in Parklands Girls' High School. The school is able to take 140. It does not have many pupils on roll from elsewhere in Leeds. Not enough parents are choosing single sex education for their daughters. In the east of Leeds the population of young people is growing, and all the other local schools in the area are full or nearly full. Parklands is also at the heart of the EASEL regeneration area, which will deliver more family homes to this area of Leeds. We need more school places in the East of Leeds to meet the needs of a growing population and ensure that more young people are given the best chance to achieve their potential in a thriving and increasingly successful school.
- 3.5.2 The school has just recorded its best ever GCSE results with 33% of students gaining at least five GCSEs including English and mathematics, for the first time beating the government's floor target of 30%. Because of the way schools are funded, any fall in the number of girls attending the school puts pressure on Parklands' budget and its ability to continue making progress.
- 3.5.3 We are not confident that the attendance; standards; achievement; and budget situation: can improve quickly enough to benefit girls in the school now and in the future. This is in part because the number of girls attending the school is reducing it will be harder to keep the school's best staff and that will make continuing improvements very difficult indeed.
- 3.5.4 With the input from the proposed sponsor (EACT) we are confident that all these issues will be addressed and continuous improvement will be secured by:

- consolidating and accelerating current progress to ensure that all students achieve their personal and academic potential;
- making extra capacity available in the form of resources and professional expertise so that continuing improvement is sustained;
- challenging and supporting the academy to become a 'Centre of Excellence' and a beacon for learning throughout the community;
- ensuring the life-chances of every single student are enhanced and that they are equipped to become successful citizens, who contribute fully to the academy and to the social and economic well-being of the wider community.

3.5.5 The EACT have agreed to sign and abide by the Leeds Memorandum of Understanding on how academies will operate in Leeds.

3.5.6 A move to formally consult on a proposal to close Parklands Girls' High School and replace it by an academy sponsored by the EACT does not require the City Council to make binding decisions on the future of Parklands Girls' High School at this stage. If through the process of consultation an alternative proposal emerges as the best solution for improving young people's outcomes in east Leeds, it could still be developed. However it should be noted that the City Council's response to this consultation will be linked to the outcome of the consultation below on the future of girls only secondary education in Leeds (see 3.6.6 below). A further report will be available in April that will enable the Council to decide how to take these proposals forward.

3.5.7 The public consultation document is attached as Annex 3.

3.6 Girls only secondary education in Leeds

3.6.1 Research on single-sex education concludes that there is no convincing evidence that it has a significant impact on pupil performance.

3.6.2 There is currently one girls-only secondary school in Leeds – Parklands Girls' High School. Every year fewer parents in Leeds choose girls only education for their daughter. There are 140 Year 7 places at the school, but only 74 girls in Year 7. Of the parents and carers of girls starting Year 7 in 2009, 63 selected Parklands as their first preference, six placed it second and five placed it third. This means the school only fills 45% of its places through first preferences, down from 48.6% in 2008 and 64.2% in 2007.

3.6.3 Because of the way schools are funded, this puts pressure on Parklands Girls' High School's budget. The school doesn't have enough money for staff or resources, making it very difficult to keep improving standards in the classroom. This will mean that girls at the school will not receive the same opportunity to achieve their potential as their peers who are attending other schools in the city. Unless there is a large and immediate increase in the number of parents choosing girls only education for their daughter, this problem will only get worse.

- 3.6.4 The majority of girls who attend Parklands Girls' High School do so because it is their local neighbourhood school. Few girls travel across the city specifically to attend a single-sex girls' school. This suggests that there is limited demand across the city for girls-only education.
- 3.6.5 Not enough parents are choosing single sex education for their daughters. Education is the key to improving life chances for children and young people in Leeds. This means we need good, inclusive and improving schools. We have to make sure that every school is strongly supported and valued by parents, carers and its local community. At the moment, girls-only education is not strongly supported in Leeds so we need to ask the people of Leeds if we should continue to provide it.
- 3.6.6 A move to formally consult on a proposal to stop providing girls-only secondary education in Leeds has the potential to have an impact on how the council responds to the outcome of the consultation on the future of Parklands Girls' High School. Therefore the outcomes of these two consultations must be considered to be linked. If through the process of consultation an alternative proposal emerges as the best solution to improve the popularity of girls only secondary education in Leeds, it could still be developed. A further report will be available in April that will enable the Council to decide how to take these proposals forward.
- 3.6.7 The public consultation document is attached as Annex 4.

3.7 Other issues

- 3.7.1 The Central Leeds Learning Federation was established between Primrose High School and City of Leeds High School to explore how this model of governance could add capacity to each school's ambitions to improve outcomes. The Federation has provided real opportunities for the flexible deployment of resources and expertise. However, both schools continue to face considerable challenges. The leadership capacity available to the federation has been a limiting factor and the shared capacity for improvement available through the Federation has been divided between developing the new model and improving outcomes. As a result, the Federation has been unsuccessful and has not impacted sufficiently on outcomes for young people.
- 3.7.2 As a consequence of these proposals, should either Primrose High School or City of Leeds High School close in 2011 then the Central Leeds Learning Federation would automatically be dissolved.
- 3.7.3 Whilst there are relatively small pupil cohorts entering the secondary sector between 2010 and 2012, cohort sizes will begin to increase again from 2013 onwards reflecting the larger cohort sizes currently within primary schools. The sharply rising birth indicates a need in the longer term to plan secondary and 14-19 provision on a scale that reflects this growth. The proposed co-educational academy on the Parklands site needs to be larger than the demand for the predecessor school to make allowance for future population growth and the impact of EASEL regeneration.

3.8 The proposed consultation process

3.8.1 Subject to the Board's agreement it is proposed that the consultation will run from Thursday the 7th of January 2010 until Friday the 5th of March 2010.

3.8.2 The consultation booklet will be available on the Education Leeds website at: www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation. It will be available in each of the Council's one stop shops and libraries, and copies will also be provided to each of the three schools. Finally the booklet will also been widely distributed to many interested people and groups, including local councillors, MPs, the Catholic and Church of England Dioceses, and trades unions.

3.8.3 The proposals will be considered by the Inner North West, Inner North East, Inner East, and Outer East Area Committees. There will also be meetings with each school council, staff team, and governors to capture their feedback on the proposals that impact directly on them. In each school there will be a public meeting. In addition to this there will be a series of public meetings in various locations across Leeds in order to capture responses to the proposal to stop providing girls only education in Leeds. Minutes will be produced following each meeting and these will be presented as part of the report on the consultation to the March meeting of Executive Board.

3.8.4 Written responses can be made:

- Using the pro-forma in the consultation booklet, which includes details of where to send it.
- By letter, to school organisation team, 9th Floor West, Merrion House, Merrion Way, Leeds LS2 8DT,
- By email: educ.school.organisation@educationleeds.co.uk

Responses can be anonymous. However, people will be encouraged to give reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the proposals so that as much information as possible is available to the Executive Board when making their next decision.

3.8.5 All the responses received will be summarised and presented to the April Executive Board meeting.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

4.1 Since Leeds Admissions Policy is based on a "nearest" criteria that applies to all mixed sex, non faith schools and academies, a proposal to cease to provide places on the City of Leeds site would change the priority areas for all of the neighbouring secondary schools. Similarly co-educational provision on the Parklands site would alter priority areas for all of its neighbouring secondary schools. Any decision to retain girl's only education on a site other than the Parklands site would change the priority areas for all of the secondary schools in Leeds. Such changes would need to be reflected in the published admission

arrangements. The outcome of these consultations would need to be considered as part of the annual consultation on admission arrangements for Leeds and form part of the published admission arrangements for 2011.

- 4.2 If the proposal to stop providing girls only secondary education in Leeds is accepted by the council then consideration will need to be given to how to respond to those parents who opted to send their daughters to Parklands Girls High School specifically because it provided girls only education. Special arrangements may have to be made with neighbouring authorities and additional transport costs incurred during the transition.
- 4.3 Proposals identified in this report would impact on the “Narrowing the Gap” and “Going up a League” agendas. Academies in Leeds have the potential to contribute to the ambitious targets to meet key priorities within the Children and Young People’s Plan and the work on the Local Area Agreement.
- 4.4 The proposals would address the requirements of the Council to respond to the National Challenge in respect of any structural change to the targeted schools.

5.0 LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Parklands Girls High School occupies generally poor buildings and was a part of Leeds’ successful BSF wave 1 bid. The limited capital allocation available for a scheme has been retained pending a decision on the future of the school/site. However, the DCSF have now indicated that a further £10m is now available to support an academy proposal aligned to population growth, enabling both a larger facility and a transformational scheme to be developed. This has the potential to significantly contribute not only to the educational outcomes for children in east Leeds but also to the Council’s wider regeneration aspirations for that community. The proposed co-educational academy will offer provision to children and young people aged 11-18, with an admission limit rising to 240 in their new building. Although larger than current demand would warrant, this provides for future growth as well as displacement caused by the proposed closure of City of Leeds High School
- 5.2 Primrose High School currently occupies a PFI building with Shakespeare Primary School and Local Authority Children’s Centre. There will be both legal and financial implications associated with the transfer of part of this PFI resource from the local authority to an academy sponsor. These financial implications will have to be explicitly addressed in any subsequent report to the Executive Board on these proposals.
- 5.3 The funding of secondary and post-16 provision in Leeds is a significant part of the Children’s Services overall budget and part of the Learning and Skills Council budget. The establishment of two further academies in Leeds has financial implications for Leeds City Council. These financial implications will be explicitly addressed in any subsequent report to the Executive Board on these proposals.
- 5.4 All staff permanently employed at Primrose High School will benefit from employment protection legislation and will automatically transfer into the new academy under TUPE regulations. Similarly staff permanently employed at

Parklands Girls' High School will automatically transfer into the new academy under TUPE regulations. However, staff currently employed at City of Leeds High School will be potentially redundant if these proposals are ultimately accepted. Education Leeds and Leeds City Council will use their existing and largely successful arrangements to find alternative employment for these staff.

5.5 Following consultation, should the Executive Board wish to proceed with these proposals then statutory notices will be required.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

i) approve moving to formal consultation on a proposal to close Primrose High School in August 2011, and that a new 11-18 Academy, sponsored by the Co-operative Group, with Leeds City College as education partner, open on the site in September 2011;

iii) approve moving to formal consultation on a proposal to close City of Leeds High School and the future use of the site for educational purposes;

iii) approve moving to formal consultation on a proposal to close Parklands Girls High School in August 2011, and that a new co-educational 11-18 Academy, sponsored by the Edutrust Academies Charitable Trust (EACT), open on the site in September 2011;

iv) approve a city wide consultation on the future of girls only secondary education in Leeds;

v) note that a further report will be submitted in April 2010 that will explain the outcome of these consultations and enable Members to decide how to take these proposals forward.

Background Papers:-

Executive Board, 5 December 2008 – Building School for the Future: Expression of interest for follow-on projects

Executive Board January 2009 – The National Challenge and structural change to secondary provision in Leeds Progress Report

Executive Board March 2009 – The National Challenge and Structural Change to Secondary Provision in Leeds

Executive Board October 2009 - The National Challenge and Structural Change to Secondary Provision in Leeds