



Report of Chief Executive, Education Leeds

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 1st February 2010

Subject: Consultation on a proposal to relocate the West SILC (Victoria Park) building from Farnley Park Maths and Computing College to Bruntcliffe High School.

Electoral Wards Affected:

Farnley
Morley South

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Area Committee with the consultation document on proposals for the relocation of the West SILC (Victoria Park) modular building at Farnley Park Maths and Computing College to Bruntcliffe High School

The consultation document appended forms the basis of the report. Members of the Area Committee are asked to consider this and comment on the proposals.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

- 1.1 The consultation document appended forms the basis of this report.
- 1.2 The consultation document asks for comments on proposals to move the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) for young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) provided at the West SILC (Victoria Park) on the Farnley Park Maths and Computing College site to Bruntcliffe High School, Morley

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The West SILC is one of five community special schools in Leeds. It provides for a range of complex special educational needs (2-19 years) for children on whom the local authority maintains a statement of special educational needs (EA 1996) either on one of two main sites or in mainstream partnership bases.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The West SILC (Victoria Park) building is a modular construction which was put on the site of Farnley Park on a temporary basis. Longer term permanent arrangements are now required in keeping with the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy.
- 3.2 The plans for refurbishment of Farnley Park require the contractors to start on site in November 2010. The new build extension at Farnley Park necessarily covers part of the same footprint as the SILC modular building. It is important that during the proposed building works vulnerable children and young people at the West SILC (Victoria Park on the Farnley Park site) continue to be educated in a safe and secure, high quality learning environment with minimum disruption. In addition we need to maintain the current programme for works with minimal slippage in timescales. As a consequence of these factors the SILC modular unit will be relocated away from the building site at the end of the Summer term 2010. Permanent SILC facilities for young people with severe and complex needs will open in the new Farnley Park building in Summer 2012.
- 3.3 When planning any changes to SEN provision the local authority is required to consider making statutory proposals following DCSF guidance. Most recent guidance recommends that we aim to improve on current provision taking into account the flexibility and capacity required to meet the needs of individual children through access to appropriate specialist support and advice. Education Leeds wishes to improve pupil progress and raise the achievements of vulnerable children and young people.
- 3.4 Young people with SEN are as likely to make good progress with their academic, personal and social development in mainstream or special schools so long as there are high quality specialist teachers and a commitment by the senior leadership team and governors to create opportunities to include everyone (Ofsted 2006). Any future arrangement for provision will take full account of this research finding.
- 3.5 A range of alternative locations has been considered to ascertain formal proposals on which to consult. For example these have included moving the modular buildings elsewhere on the Farnley Park site or indeed on to other local secondary schools.
- 3.6 The feasible option which has been developed for formal consultation, with senior leadership teams, governors and parents of the school populations affected, is to relocate the West SILC (Victoria Park) modular building currently at Farnley Park Maths and Computing College to Bruntcliffe High School, a school in the south of the city but situated only 2.6 miles from Farnley Park Maths and Computing College. There is sufficient space on site to accommodate the West SILC accommodation. The school has an inclusive and supportive ethos and there is a willingness to work in close partnership with the SILC.

Ten of the young people already live in the south of the city and travel some distance to the West SILC (Victoria Park) site at Farnley Park. The model for co-location of the SILC would be in keeping with the existing arrangement at Farnley Park because it maintains maximum continuity for children in that their learning environment would be within the same modular building and they would stay together. There would also be continuity for staffing. Furthermore, the Principal of the West SILC is of the view that the children should be able to stay together and this would maintain full curriculum delivery.

- 3.7 Future arrangements need to ensure all agencies and services are working towards helping every child to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, to enjoy their learning and to be free from the effects of poverty. This proposal will provide an opportunity for high quality inclusive learning for some of the most vulnerable young people in Leeds as well as their families.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1 The LA has a statutory duty to provide appropriate places for the education of children in the city including the relocation of the West SILC pupils. The development of specialist provision 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.
- 4.2 Planning permission will be required for all options that involve building work or the relocation of the SILC building.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 A formal consultation on the proposal has now commenced. The outcome from this consultation will be reported to the Executive Board in April 2010. A final decision will be taken in Summer 2010. The results will be reported back to the Executive Board and the intention is to carry out a further statutory process before any final decision is made.
- 5.2 It will cost circa £1M to transfer the whole unit and prepare the necessary groundwork and this will be met within the existing capital programme.
- 5.3 Transport costs would need to be fully considered following consultation with parents as to preferred location.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Area Committee is requested to
- Note and consider the report appended
 - Consider any response they wish to make as a part of the consultation

Background Papers

- Executive Board Report, 9th December 2009. Proposal to relocate the West SILC from the Farnley Park site under Building Schools for the Future