
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 9 December 2009

SUBJECT: Proposal to relocate the West SILC from the Farnley Park site under Building Schools for the Future

Electoral Wards Affected:

Farnley
Morley South

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 This report seeks approval to undertake formal consultation on the relocation of the West SILC (Victoria Park) modular building at Farnley Park Maths and Computing college to Bruntcliffe High School.

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.

2.2 In September 2009 there were 86 children and young people (11-16 years) on the roll of the West SILC. From September 2009 there were approximately 52 young people (years 7 – 11) based in a modular building at the colocated site at Farnley Park Maths and Computing College which consists of 15 rooms including specialist rooms for science and practical subjects.

2.3 The most recent Ofsted inspection of the West SILC took place in October 2006. At that time the school was judged to be a satisfactory and improving learning

provision with some good features. In keeping with the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy (LILS) the West SILC provides a range of inclusive partnership bases in mainstream schools in the west wedge. Achievement at the SILC was described as good at the Farnley Park site including at the mainstream provision because of good teaching.

- 2.4 Farnley Park Maths and Computing College is in the process of receiving a major refurbishment of the school building as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF). The vision for the school is to provide a spectacular learning environment for all children and young people including highly specialist facilities for young people with complex needs in a high care partnership base for 30 within the design of the main building. This will provide state of the art teaching and learning facilities including the provision of 21st century ICT.
- 2.5 The new provision at Farnley Park will be fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and will significantly improve accessibility in the physical and learning environment and promote equality of opportunity for children with disabilities.

3. **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 September 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 The longer term vision for the secondary aged young people in the SILC in the west wedge includes the following BSF new facilities:-
- Farnley Park Maths and Computing College High care partnership base (30)
(September 2012)
 - Priesthorpe School Learning difficulties (30)
(April 2011)
 - Swallow Hill Community College (Learning and communication
difficulties (30)
(September 2009)
- 3.4 The Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy adopts the following core principles:-
- Learners should be educated in the nearest provision to their home and in

the least restrictive environment.

- There should be a range of provision pathways within each locality
- There will be increased capacity for specialist provision within mainstream settings

The strategy also proposes the provision of a full range of specialist services within each wedge.

- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 Any formal change to this provision requires the publication of notices and the use of the statutory process. The statutory process has two stages which will involve firstly a consultation on a preferred option and then secondly a statutory notice confirming a formal proposal. Each stage will need to be approved by the Executive Board. It is proposed that consultation will involve all relevant stakeholders, including schools directly affected, parents/carer(s), governors, ward Members beginning in January 2010.

4.0 Consultation Proposal

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.

- 4.3 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.

5.0 Consultation Arrangements

- 5.1 Informal discussions have already been held with the West SILC (Victoria Park) senior leadership team, the chair of governors and with Education Leeds staff. An analysis of all young people's needs has been undertaken using the records available.

5.2

Detailed discussion on the provision required to meet the needs of individual young people will take place with parent/carer(s) as an important part of the consultation process. Every young person will have been subject to a statutory annual review process of their SEN during the academic year 2008/9. During the current academic year the Annual Review, or Interim Annual Review, process for all the young people at the West SILC (Victoria Park) will include specific consideration of the place which best meets their needs with effect from September 2010. It is anticipated that for the majority of young people this will mean they move together with their teaching staff to the new site for the SILC. Should the proposal proceed then any final decision about where a child is educated will be made on the basis of each young person's individual needs and taking full account of parental preference and the wishes of young people.

- 5.3 We will consult with partner agencies and services, particularly from health, children's social care and 14-19 partners who also provide a range of specialist services to the children, their families and the West SILC and local elected members. We wish to ensure access to appropriate specialist support from a range of Education Leeds services such as extended services as well as specialist services such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. We also have a duty to co-operate with local partners such as the Primary Care Trust to improve children's well-being and so we will ensure that young people affected by this change to their provision can also benefit from improvements in their service delivery arrangements.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Planning permission will be required for all options that involve building work or the relocation of the SILC building.
- 6.4 Standard LCC procurement rules apply and therefore authority to spend and to tender must be sought. The financial approval process, including the time required to seek tenders or gain approval for a waiver, must be considered alongside other statutory processes.

7.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendation of this report is to proceed to a formal consultation on the proposal commencing in January 2010. The outcome from this consultation will be reported to the Executive Board in March 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Transport costs would need to be fully considered following consultation with parents as to preferred location.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Board is recommended to:

1. agree to consult on the relocation of the provision currently made in the West SILC (Victoria Park) modular building at Farnley Park Maths and Computing College as planned under Building Schools for the Future.
2. receive a further report in March 2010 reporting on the outcome of the consultation commencing in January 2010.

Background Papers

There are no background papers to this report.