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## **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD: 7<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**SUBJECT: Outcome of statutory consultation for changes to primary provision in Horsforth for September 2011**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

This report summarises the outcome of consultation to make changes to primary age provision in the Horsforth area for September 2011, and seeks permission to publish statutory notices.

The consultation was conducted on proposals to:

- i) change the age ranges and admission limits of Horsforth Newlaithes Junior School and Horsforth Featherbank Infant School, to establish them both as all age primary schools from September 2011, to provide 30 extra reception class places (210 places in total), and
- ii) increase the size of West End Primary to provide 15 extra reception places per year (105 places in total)

#### **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In December 2009 the Executive Board approved a formal consultation on plans to permanently expand seven primary schools for September 2011, including the expansion of West End Primary. In January 2010 the Executive Board also approved a formal consultation on proposals for changes to Featherbank Infant and Newlaithes Junior. These proposals all formed part of Education Leeds' plans for ensuring sufficiency of provision across the city in the context of a growing pre-school population.

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, these changes constitute a prescribed alteration, and require a statutory process to confirm the change and make it permanent. Public consultation is the first stage of this process. The consultation for all three schools was managed together, to provide a holistic view of the proposals for Horsforth.

#### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Board is asked to:

- i) consider the responses to the consultation for proposals in Horsforth
- ii) approve publication of statutory notices for the linked proposals to
  - a. decrease the lower age range of Horsforth Newlaithes Junior School from 7-11 to 5-11, with an admission limit of 60, and with an overall capacity of 420 children **and**
  - b. increase the age range of Horsforth Featherbank Infant School from 4-7 to 4-11, and decrease the admissions number from 60 to 30, with an overall capacity of 210 children.
- iii) agree that proposals to permanently expand West End Primary in 2011 be withdrawn at the present time, although note that the need for places in the area will continue to be monitored and that the school will continue to be considered as an option for expansion on a temporary or permanent basis at a later stage.

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## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

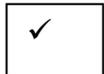
EXECUTIVE BOARD: 7th April 2010

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### Electoral Wards Affected:

Horsforth



Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

### Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity



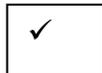
Community Cohesion



Narrowing the Gap

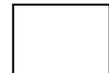


Eligible for Call-in



Not Eligible for Call-in

(Details contained in the Report)



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## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the outcome of consultation to make changes to primary age provision in the Horsforth area for September 2011, and seeks permission to publish statutory notices.

The consultation was conducted on proposals to

- i) change the age ranges and admissions limits of Horsforth Newlaithes Junior School and Horsforth Featherbank Infant School, to establish them both as all age primary schools from September 2011, to provide 30 extra reception class places (210 places in total), and
- ii) increase the size of West End to provide 15 extra reception places (105 places in total)

## 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In December 2009 the Executive Board approved a formal consultation on plans to permanently expand seven primary schools for September 2011, including the expansion of West End Primary. In January 2010 the Executive Board also approved a formal consultation on proposals for changes to Featherbank infant and Newlaithes Junior Schools.

- 2.2 These proposals all form part of Education Leeds plans for ensuring sufficiency of provision across the city in the context of a growing pre-school population. As part of these plans, proposals for expansion at Iveson and Ireland Wood primaries in the Cookridge area have already been consulted on for September 2010. Publication of statutory notices for these expansions was approved by the Executive Board at its February meeting. These are relevant to the Horsforth proposals as a number of children living in Cookridge currently access places in Horsforth schools.
- 2.3 Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, these proposed changes constitute a prescribed alteration, and require a statutory process to confirm the change and make it permanent. Public consultation is the first stage of this process. The consultation for all three schools was managed together, to provide a holistic view of the proposals for the area.

### **3.0 MAIN ISSUES**

#### **3.1 Consultation.**

- 3.11 Demographic data describing the need for places in the area was contained in the consultation booklet. It identifies that up to 45 extra reception places are needed in Horsforth from 2011. This is based mainly on children already born in the area. There is a small allowance for children arising from new housing developments, however this amounts to only 2 children per year group in total. It is a popular residential area, and as such it is likely that further small amounts of demand will continue to be created from a range of similar small developments in the area for the foreseeable future. There are several larger housing developments being discussed in the area, most notably sites at Kirkstall Forge, Clariant/Riverside, and Woodside. The authority is in discussions with the developers about the requirements for contributions and land for new schools to meet the need for places that would be generated from these developments. This future need will be in addition to that which forms the basis of these proposals.
- 3.12 Whilst pupil projections show a slight drop off in 2013/14, they reflect both the increasing births, and the historical patterns of where children have accessed places in the past. The birth rate in Horsforth itself has dropped slightly from a peak in 2007, although for the past 5 years it has remained consistently higher than in the preceding 5 years. In view of this, the Education Leeds wishes to ensure there is no over expansion in the area, which could serve to undermine the planned expansions in Cookridge, as well as other established neighbouring schools.
- 3.13 A series of informal meetings with heads and chair of governors took place in October 2009. At these meetings the current local context, including the forthcoming 2010 proposals and projected need were discussed. A range of options for expanding provision in the area were identified. Ward members were also briefed on the options available and these proposals.
- 3.14 From the informal discussions the preferred options were identified by Education Leeds and put forward as the proposals. The purpose of the consultation was to gain the views of all stakeholders, and to inform a decision about whether to proceed with these proposals, a modified version of the proposals, or to re-consult on alternative proposals. Full details of the proposed options, an outline of the rationale, and some alternative options with a brief outline of their relative merit, were all identified in the consultation document. Meetings were held with ward members, staff, governors, school council, and the public. A list of consultees is provided in Appendix 1. The next sections provide an outline of the key aspects of the proposals and responses

to them.

A comprehensive summary of the issues raised is contained in Appendix 2.

**3.2 Proposals to change Featherbank Infant School into a one form of entry primary school, and Newlaithes Junior School into a two forms of entry primary school. Provides 30 extra reception places, 210 places in total.**

3.21 The proposed changes would remove the need for transition between infant and junior schools, which can present a risk of disruption for pupils. It is recognised that the schools currently manage this transition well, and there was strong representation from parents to say they do not feel this is a significant issue. Some respondents viewed it as a positive since it offers a sense of progression and prepares for transition to high school. The proposal would reduce choice by removing an infant/junior option, however it would increase the choice between the number of primary schools in Horsforth.

3.22 Through primary schools can offer greater career development opportunities for staff, and a broader range of activities and can find it easier therefore to attract and retain staff.

3.23 As linked Infant and Junior schools there can be an imbalance between pupil numbers in different year groups which can pose some difficulties for the schools to manage. In particular, when new families arrive in the area with children in both age ranges, they can find that one school is full while the other has spaces. If this happens they may prefer to choose an alternative school where both children can have a place. Creating primary schools would allow the schools greater capacity to manage this variation in numbers across the full age range. This includes managing budgets and staffing levels. This proposal is intended to provide the most appropriate long term structure of sustainable provision to allow flexibility as numbers rise and fall in future. Maps in Appendix 3 show that that Horsforth children would continue to receive priority under the 'nearest' criteria within the admissions policy.

**3.3 Transition to all through primary schools.**

3.31 Key to this proposal is the transition plan which delivers the two primary schools. Education Leeds put forward an initial transition plan which would take seven years in total.

3.32 It was acknowledged that there would be disruption to staffing levels at Featherbank, but the governing body at Newlaithes had indicated they would be willing to ring fence any new posts for Featherbank staff, and to offer posts on a secondment basis to allow staff to return once the school started to expand again. Featherbank would gain financial protection during this transition, through the small schools protection and safety net elements of the funding formula. This should ensure the continued delivery of a good quality education.

3.33 Both schools initially indicated they were unable to support the proposals with this transition plan. Their concern focussed on the time taken to complete transition, vulnerability of Featherbank due to concern over the school shrinking to a one FE infant before growing to a primary school, and the effects on staff both individually and as a team. Parents expressed a range of views from supporting the proposal to wanting full choice to be introduced at the end of year two. Allowing children already in the system to at least express a preference between the two schools was key, and preferably to allow full choice.

- 3.34 In response to these concerns an alternative transition plan was developed. It is proposed that Featherbank become a primary from the outset, by raising its upper age limit, and still reducing its admission limit into reception. In this way, the smaller numbers entering could be offset by some children staying in the school beyond year two. Newlaithes would still begin to admit 60 into reception in 2011, and continue admitting into year 3 as well, for three years. This does mean that there is less certainty around where pupils choose to stay on roll but should be manageable.
- 3.35 To provide maximum parental choice, and to continue to guarantee a place for anyone who expected to transfer to Newlaithes, an additional 60 places would continue to be offered in year 3 at Newlaithes. Every child would be entitled to remain on the roll of Featherbank as they moved from year 2 to year 3, or have the option of transferring to Newlaithes. Both schools have indicated they could support and would manage this option.
- 3.36 An illustration of the transition options is presented in Appendix 4.

### 3.4 **Site concerns**

- 3.41 Under the proposal the Featherbank site would need to accommodate 210 children, rather than the current 180. The existing buildings could be adapted to meet this need. Featherbank do not have any grass play area, although the school have suggested they would access the local park. This may affect the relative popularity of the school in the area. Many parents raised concerns about the safety of smaller children on the site with a full primary age range, especially at play times, and expressed the view that the site was not suitable for the full primary age range. In most through primary schools reception children would not play in the same space at the same time as year 6 children, and the school would manage the play times accordingly. There is a large area of hard standing not currently used by the school, which could help to provide separated play areas.
- 3.42 Newlaithes would, under these proposals, increase its capacity from 240 to 420 pupils. Significant new building would be required, and initial appraisal suggests this is feasible at the site, without significantly impacting on the grassed play area or on local residents. The building project would assess all of the infrastructure requirements of the increased numbers, including dining space. Detailed building plans will be developed if, following consultation, these proposals proceed, and they will be subject to the normal planning application process. Traffic volumes and road safety issues were raised as a significant concern for the school and community, and would need to be considered in any plans. This might include the use of drop off zones and walking buses. The Highways Agency will consider the traffic issues as part of any planning application.

### 3.5 **Staffing issues.**

- 3.51 Initially Featherbank staff indicated a preference for working in an infant setting, but the school has since been keen to demonstrate their willingness and ability to teach throughout the primary age range. Overall the number of teaching and non teaching staff posts will increase, but it is possible that some temporary staffing reductions may still be necessary during a transition.
- 3.52 Newlaithes governing body have indicated their willingness to ring fence posts and offer them on a secondment basis during the transition period. Any process to decide how any staffing reductions would occur would have to be agreed with unions, in line with current HR policies and procedures. At this stage both permanent redeployment and secondment options could be explored. Education Leeds would work with both

schools and unions to avoid any redundancies as a result of the proposed changes to both schools.

### 3.6 **Alternatives to create additional capacity at Featherbank and Newlaithes.**

3.61 **Increase the schools to 3FE infant and 3FE junior.** This option had considerable parental support. The issues around choice and diversity are discussed in para 3.41 above. It requires 270 children to be housed on the Featherbank site, which remains a concern. It does not reduce the risks associated with transition, or offer staff the enhanced staff development opportunities of a primary school. The schools remain more vulnerable to demographic changes, as there are a limited number of year groups to balance. Both governing bodies have indicated a preference for moving towards primary schools.

3.62 **Creation of a single 3FE through primary on two sites.** Either through the creation of one school, or by a federation, this could offer a flexible use of both sites, retaining some of the feel of an infant and junior setting, with the management structure of a single school offering some of the advantages of a primary. Initially offered by Newlaithes as an alternative to remove the concerns around the transition arrangements, after further discussion neither school supports this plan. It would also present significant challenges in managing two sites so far apart.

3.63 **Leave Featherbank unchanged, and increase Newlaithes to one FE infant and three FE juniors.** This would minimise the impact on the Featherbank site, but it is not clear an appropriate buildings solution could be found. Little interest was generated during consultation for this option, which is more complicated than other viable options.

### 3.7 **Proposed expansion of West End Primary to one and a half forms of entry, i.e. an admission limit of 45, to provide 15 extra reception places (105 places in total)**

3.71 There was strong opposition to the potential introduction of mixed age classes from parents. The school and governing body acknowledged in the consultation that there need be no adverse impact on educational or social outcomes for children arising from mixed age classes, a view held very strongly by Education Leeds. Nonetheless the school reflected the views of parents, and felt strongly that they wished to avoid this, as it created unnecessary concern amongst parents, and demands considerable extra time in managing those concerns, and also in planning the year groups.

3.72 Some parents opposed any expansion at all. They felt this would alter the ethos of the school. The school themselves felt they could manage an expansion, but acknowledged the concerns of parents.

3.73 Many parents, and the school, argued that if expansion was required it should be to 60 places per year, rather than 45, to avoid mixed age classes. Education Leeds believes permanent expansion to 60 at this point in time would create too much capacity in the area with the potential to impact upon the sustainability of other schools at this time. There is also concern about the feasibility of a building scheme to accommodate this solution.

3.74 Some concerns were raised about the impact of class sizes and of teacher pupil ratios if the school went to one and a half forms of entry. The infant class size legislation would still apply, requiring a maximum class size of 30 throughout key stage 1. Funding for schools is provided on a per pupil basis, meaning staff to pupil

ratios do not need to change as a result of expansion.

- 3.75 Local residents, parents and staff all expressed concerns about the impact of any expansion on the surrounding roads, which they felt were already unable to cope with the volume of traffic. This is recognised as an issue and would have to be addressed in any planning application. Options include the use of drop off zones and walking bus schemes.
- 3.76 The possibility of temporary expansion was raised by the governing body of the school, for cohorts of 30. An expansion of this type could be agreed for two years without any statutory process. It is not without merit, and has been given serious consideration. It would allow time to see what happens to the birth rate, and ensure the long term sustainability of any expansion. However, it could also introduce surplus capacity in the short term, and would complicate the aspiration for an integrated building solution.

### **3.8 A new additional primary school.**

- 3.81 The possibility of establishing a new school rather than changing existing schools was identified. The consultation identified some support for this option. Under current legislation it is not possible for the authority to simply open a new community primary school. There is a requirement to hold a competition to find parties interested in running a school. This might include parental groups, faith groups, other schools and school trusts, private voluntary or independent (PVI) sector group, and educational charities. The timeframe for establishing such a school is likely to be at least four years, assuming the funding and land can be found for a new school. As no land or funding has been identified this option was ruled out for 2011, but will be considered as part of the longer term option appraisal.

### **3.9 Changes at other local primary schools.**

- 3.91 All the schools in the area were originally considered for expansion, but most were considered hard to expand. Broadgate Primary used to be a larger school, however it now houses the Children's Centre on its grounds. The centre is a valued resource, and reclaiming that property would require the repayment of significant grants, as well as requiring a solution to re-house the Children's Centre. The site itself has narrow access and significant level variations which would add cost and complexity to any project. St Mary's is a Catholic VA school, and the diocese do not require additional Catholic places. St Margaret's CE and Westbrook Lane are on very constrained sites. Expansion on the High School site to accommodate some primary provision has potential logistical difficulties. These options may need to be reappraised if demand continues to grow, but they do not at present offer a logistical or good value solution.
- 3.92 There were no other suggestions or views raised during the consultation which would indicate that the proposals were not deliverable options for 2011. This report therefore now focuses on the proposals, and the remaining potentially deliverable alternatives.

## **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 After careful consideration of the issues raised during consultation Education Leeds believes the proposals to establish primary provision at Featherbank and at Newlathes should progress. Whilst these proposals would remove separate infant and junior provision in the Horsforth area, primary schools enhance the consistency of the learning environment with risks at transition reduced, and offer greater staff

development opportunities. Primary schools offer greater sustainability and flexibility in responding to fluctuations in either parental demand or population change. The governing bodies and staff of both schools have indicated their support for these proposals in principle and will manage the change to primary status with the support of Education Leeds.

- 4.2 Education Leeds acknowledges the schools' intent to manage the uncertainty created by the emerging transition plan, and will therefore promote the transition plan which establishes a Year 3 cohort at Featherbank in 2011 and retains an admission limit of 60 places in year 3 at Newlaithes. This provides maximum parental choice, and ensures all those who joined Featherbank have the opportunity to stay, or to transfer as they had expected. Numbers at Featherbank might still decrease in the short term but to a lesser extent and potentially not at all. This creates the potential for minimum disruption to the existing staffing teams at both schools. Both schools have indicated support for this transition plan. Both schools would become primaries within four years.
- 4.3 Education Leeds believes that these revised proposals present no increased challenges in the use of both existing school sites. Any expansion highlights Featherbank's lack of green space. Consideration should be given to the use of existing local green space. Education Leeds notes the request from Featherbank governing body to establish a nursery as a condition of its support for the proposal. The establishment of pre-school provision is the responsibility of the Early Years service to whom the request has been passed.
- 4.4 In response to the issues raised during the consultations, Education Leeds recommends the withdrawal of the proposal to permanently enlarge West End Primary in 2011, although expansion remains feasible and may yet be required from 2012 or subsequently. It will work flexibly with the school during the admissions round to accept temporary increases into the school if necessary. An expansion proposal can be considered in future as new data on birth rates and demand emerge, potentially linked to the larger housing developments being considered around Horsforth.

## **5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The capital works required to deliver these proposals will be funded through the Education capital programme. Although detailed designs and costs have not been developed at this stage, high level estimates for the two schemes total £800k. Further reports, seeking financial approval for the fully costed specific schemes will be brought to the Executive Board in due course.
- 5.2 Small school protection funding and safety net funding would both be available to Featherbank in the unlikely event of a significant short term drop in pupil numbers.
- 5.3 Both schools have asked if additional or rephased funding can be found to recognise the set up costs for a new key stage. Education Leeds is exploring this possibility.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Executive Board is asked to:
- i) consider the responses to the consultation on proposals for Horsforth;
  - ii) approve publication of statutory notices for the linked proposals to:

- a) decrease the lower age range of Horsforth Newlaithes Junior School from 7-11 to 5-11, with an admission limit of 60, and with an overall capacity of 420 children **and**
- b) increase the age range of Horsforth Featherbank Infant School from 4-7 to 4-11, and decrease the admissions number from 60 to 30, with an overall capacity of 210 children.

iii) agree that proposals to permanently expand West End Primary in 2011 be withdrawn at the present time, although note that the need for places in the area will continue to be monitored and that the school will continue to be considered as an option for expansion on a temporary or permanent basis at a later stage.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND REPORTS**

22 July 2009 Proposed increases in Admissions Limits for September 2010

17 June 2009 Expanding Primary Place Provision

17 June 2009 Proposal to add specialist community provision at Whitkirk Primary School for pupils with complex physical difficulties and medical needs.

October 2009 Letter from Office of Schools Adjudicator

October 2009 Proposal for statutory consultation for the expansion of primary provision for September 2010

December 2009 Proposal for statutory consultation for the expansion of primary provision for September 2011

January 2010 Proposal for statutory consultation for changes to primary provision at Horsforth Newlaithes Junior School and Featherbank Infant School in 2011

February 2010 Outcome of consultation for the expansion of primary provision for September 2010

## Appendix 1 Full list of consultees and consultation methods.

Consultee	Consultation method
Parents/carers of children at directly affected schools	individual letters, documents, and spare response sheets
Parents/ carers of children at other primary schools	letters advising documents and spare response sheets at schools and on line
Parents/ carers of children preferencing Horsforth schools for Sept 2010	individual letters, documents, and spare response sheets (sent 2 weeks into consultation)
All Schools in areas	posters advertising meetings and spare documents.
LCC Councillors	documents
MPs	electronic link to document
Education Leeds board	documents
Education Leeds Heads of Service	electronic link to document
LCC Leadership Team	electronic link to document
Early Years Managers	electronic link to document
Locality Enablers	electronic link to document
Area Managers	electronic link to document
Leeds Racial Equality Council	electronic link to document
Leeds Chamber of Commerce	electronic link to document
Trades Unions	electronic link to document
Catholic diocese	electronic link to document
C of E diocese	electronic link to document
Children's Centres	documents, posters and spare response sheets
Private Early Years Providers	documents, posters and spare response sheets
All libraries in Leeds	documents and posters
Family of schools	meeting
School Councils at Newlaithes and West End	meeting
Public	meeting
Area Management Committees	meeting
Staff & Governing bodies at all schools	meeting

## Appendix 2 - Analysis of the issues raised during consultation.

There were a total of 201 written responses received. Of these, 188 either directly expressed whether they agreed or disagreed, or it was possible to imply this. Eight responses did not express a position, but they did raise concerns to address if the proposals proceed. They include a union (NUT), the Education Leeds HR team, the head teacher at Featherbank, the current local MP and the labour prospective parliamentary candidate. There were 4 were duplicates, and 1 form has been misplaced – the respondent has been advised and asked to resubmit their views. One was a petition against the West End proposal signed by 101 parents/carers and staff, with no alternative suggested. Many respondents expressed views on the proposals for all three schools, some just expressed views on part of the proposals.

Respondents were asked if they agreed with statements of support for the proposals, and given options **SA** strongly agree; **A** agree; **N** neither agree nor disagree; **D** disagree; **SD** strongly disagree; **DK** don't know.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	DK	TOTAL
Support Primaries Proposal	11	33	17	19	69	8	157
Support proposed transition plan	10	18	17	16	51	9	121
Support alternative for FB /NL	21	39	21	10	15	10	116
Support West End 1.5FE	6	4	15	8	71	3	107

Of those who opposed the proposal for primary schools, approximately half supported 3FE infant and juniors instead. One opposed the proposal but felt 3FE infant and juniors was worse, while four felt it could only be a temporary measure. Four were able to support both the proposal and larger infant/juniors. Some opposed any expansion, preferring a new school, and some felt another school in Horsforth should be expanded instead.

Of the transition arrangements that could support the transition into primary schools, 16 expressed some support for alternative 2. Of these five felt the original proposal was also acceptable, and three disagreed with the proposal but if it went ahead supported either the original or alternative 2. One respondent supported alternative 1.

Of those who opposed the West End proposal, just over a third stated that they supported an expansion by a whole form of entry instead, either on a temporary or permanent basis. Many opposed any expansion, again preferring that either a new school or another existing school be considered as the solution.

Three respondents questioned the mix of numbers, suggesting a combination of 2FE at West End and an additional 0.5FE at Newlaithes/Featherbank could provide a better solution. Two suggested a solution at Featherbank and Newlaithes either through a single school or a federation.

The public meetings were very well attended, with approximately 450 people in total (although many attended more than one meeting). Through the meetings strong opposition to the removal of infant and junior schools, and to mixed age classes at West End was heard. There was also considerable opposition to any expansion at Newlaithes and West End due to site and access concerns. Transition arrangements which restricted parental choice were also opposed. The minutes of the meetings are provided on the Education Leeds website at [www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation)

Full details of the issues raised, either in the meetings or in writing, follows.

**1 Concerns about the demographics which underpin the proposals; what are the data sources, how certain are they, what role does new housing play in them,**

- 1.1 The birth data is received from the area health authority, and grouped into small postcode areas. This data is extremely robust. There are then a number of steps taken to turn this birth data into projections, which by definition will mean the two are not identical. Education Leeds tracks the relationship between the numbers of births in all areas, and the numbers entering individual schools from each area four-five years later, by using information from the school census. Historically this has included movement into Horsforth schools from outside the area, including from Cookridge. This relationship is mapped onto the new birth data to provide a projection of pupils numbers.
- 1.2 We then allow for other factors which influence the projections, most notably any new housing developments that have gained detailed planning permission, and are therefore reasonably likely to proceed in the near future. We start by considering which school they are nearest to, as this is important in determining where children will have priority to access a school place under the current admissions policy. The number of family dwellings in the scheme, and apply a ratio of 25 primary aged children per 100 family houses (ie 3 per year group). This data is less robust, as many factors can vary e.g. how quickly those houses are built, and then sold, what age any children are when they move in, and accessibility of the nearest school and which schools they might preference will all influence the accuracy of the projections, however the ration of 25:100 has proven very reliable in the long term. In this instance, of the 1785 places in total in Horsforth in 2011, 2 per year group, arise from new housing (this is a total of 14 children who arrive in 2010/11 then remain in the projections as they move through the school).
- 1.3 Projections are then considered on a planning area basis and then analysed. This interpretation of projections is vital in development of proposals. The projections at an area level are robust, however, they can be more slightly more volatile at an individual school level. This is because issues which affect the distribution of children can vary, often unpredictably and quickly. The influence and accuracy of new housing forecasts is also taken into account.
- 1.4 Including projections for housing schemes which have not yet obtained full planning permission is not prudent, as it can be many years before they are occupied. These developments are however considered in a less formulaic manner. Building too early can result in a waste of resource, building unsustainable half empty schools.
- 1.5 A significant number of respondents felt the data suggested this was a temporary issue, and therefore required a different approach. Although the birth rate in Horsforth itself has dropped off slightly from a peak in 2007, it has for the last five years remained consistently higher than the previous five years. ONS data suggests long term continued increase in the Leeds birth rate until at least 2018.

**2 Concerns about the timeliness of proposals, in particular with regard to children who had applied for places in 2010 and whose decisions may have been different if the proposals proceed.**

- 2.1 Many expressed the view that since these children have been known about for several years, proposals should have been brought forward earlier. They felt that Education Leeds had failed to plan properly. It is important to ensure the

sustainability of any changes, and to establish that the numbers are part of a longer term trend. Education Leeds has been evaluating options for some time, including informal consultation with the schools, and are bringing forward proposals now for 2011 (children born 2007/8). Permanent solutions have been preferred, as they offer clarity and the ability to plan, however temporary solutions will play a role. The comment of one respondent that planning in stages is more disruptive is noted, and is partly why planning for permanent sustainable solutions is preferred.

- 2.2 Some parents of children due to enter school in 2010 felt they would have made different decisions if the proposals proceed, and they should therefore have been informed before submitting a preference form. It is inevitable that whenever a proposal is brought forward, some will feel it affects the decisions they have made. At this stage they are only proposals, and may not go forward. It would be equally wrong to influence preferences on the basis of a proposal that did not proceed. Education Leeds seeks to minimise any distress and uncertainty by bringing forward sound proposals which it believes have strong merit, at a time which maximise clarity for families and schools, and which allows all stakeholders to participate in the decision making process.

### **3 What is the authority doing to address the need arising from major new housing developments such as Kirkstall Forge, Clariant/Riverside, and Woodside Quarry?**

- 3.3 Developer contributions for education are sought for any development of over 50 houses, where a need for additional places can be evidenced. This can be in the form of land, money or both. Developers are treated equitably in that monetary contributions are calculated on a per pupil amount, based on DCSF guidance.

- 3.4 A development of around 900 houses would generate enough children to fill a one form entry school. In these examples, Kirkstall Forge is likely to need a new school. The other developments would generate significant numbers of children, but not sufficient to sustain a school on their own. The challenge is to find a holistic solution for the area, taking into account all the developments and overall population distribution. Education Leeds is in discussion with colleagues in planning to find suitable sites for possible new school(s), and with the developers about the options available there.

- 3.5 These developments have been in discussion for a number of years, highlighting the need for careful consideration of when the children are likely to appear when planning solutions for the area. One respondent noted that it may have been better to time the consultation to take account of the separate consultation on the new housing. This might have compromised the ability to have a decision in time for parents expressing a preference for the year in which the proposals would come into effect.

### **4 Views that a new school would be a better solution for the long term.**

- 4.1 This view was generally based on the desire to avoid disruption to existing schools, and also on the influence of new housing. Notwithstanding the pressure from new housing described above, one solution to the existing demographic issue could be a new school. However, this would be a long term solution, and would not be in place for 2011 when the projections show places are needed.
- 4.2 To establish a school, the authority would first have to run a competition to determine who would run it, and then design and build it. It may be possible to open a new local authority school if no other (strong) applications were received, but this

would not lessen the timescale for this process significantly, which is likely to be around four years. It would then need to establish itself, which could take a further seven years. Given that we can only predict pupil numbers with any certainty for children already born, ie a four year horizon, this always carries a high degree of risk. Data already shows some slight drop off in the birth rate which may suggest this is not sustainable in the long term without some of the larger new housing developments. The consultation has not generated any expressions of interest in running a new school.

- 4.3 No land or funding has been identified for a new school, but this will continue to be considered as part of a longer term solution. Short term solutions would still need to be found.

## **5 Concerns that the consultation did not provide enough detail around the proposals (or any alternatives explored) to make informed representations.**

- 5.1 The consultation needs to clearly describe what the proposal is, so it is clear what people need to respond to. This is the driving principle in creating the consultation document.

- 5.2 When presented with a range of options there is often an inconclusive result. This can prolong the process unnecessarily, creating more uncertainty and worry for all stakeholders, and potentially undermining otherwise popular and successful schools. It is also inappropriate to spend significant amounts of public money on detailed plans which may never progress. Education Leeds uses the professional judgement of its officers to determine if there is sufficient merit and support for a proposal to bring it forward for consultation. If the consultation identifies an alternative possible solution, and there is sufficient interest, it may be further explored as a result.

- 5.4 Several parents felt that they needed more information to effectively challenge the proposals, and one even felt they should be offered support to draft a counter proposal. It is not the responsibility of respondents to fully assess the viability of their alternatives, but to put forward their concerns and any ideas which they feel should be explored further. In considering the responses, the decision maker will determine whether there is a need to explore these issues further.

- 5.5 See also the paragraph on specific concerns about the consultation document below.

## **6 Specific concerns about the quality of the consultation documents.**

- 6.1 Whilst a few commented that the documents offered a clear and concise view, many felt more detail was needed. There were some specific suggestions of where more detail was required.

- 6.2 Detailed building plans to support the proposals would be developed in good time, and in partnership with the schools concerned, should they proceed to the next stage. Building plans are subject to the normal planning permission process, and would mean that concerns about traffic, parking and site safety would need to be addressed at that stage.

- 6.3 Concerns about the implications of an intake of 45 are harder to address, as they would mainly be the responsibility of the school and could be managed in a variety of ways. A number of other consultations have been conducted which failed to raise this as a significant concern, however it was clear from the response here that there

were some significant misconceptions regarding class sizes, the need for extra staff, and pupil/staff ratios. Based on this experience Education Leeds acknowledges that it could improve further consultation documents by providing more information on this, and will consider including references and/or links to research on the educational and social impact of mixed age classes as suggested.

- 6.4 A number of respondents felt that more detail should have been provided on the alternatives of 2FE expansion, permanent or temporary, at West End, however these alternatives were drawn out very effectively during consultation. It was not felt appropriate to show counter proposals from the schools in the document as this could confuse the ownership of the proposal, however these were fully discussed at the meetings.
- 6.5 One respondent queried why standard costs were not available for such schemes. The estimated costs in the main body of this report are provided on that basis, and do not reflect any detailed feasibility work which may alter the costs. The details are not critical to the principles being consulted on.
- 6.6 A small number claimed that it was 'misleading, inaccurate and biased'. The specific concerns seem to be it is not clear whose preferred option the proposal is, who has been consulted to form this view, and that job losses are not addressed. Education Leeds make it clear they are the proposer throughout the document. The key issues which were considered are outlined in the document. It was not possible to describe in the document the situation in detail with regards to jobs, as this would be determined by the schools, but the document does make clear that overall there would be an increase in posts, and that during transition, under the original proposal, Featherbank would shrink before it grew. Newlathes have since offered to ring fence jobs for Featherbank staff and offer secondments, and this has been conveyed in public and to the staff during the consultation meetings. Featherbank School suggested the document was 'unclear and ambiguous', though did not specify how.
- 6.7 Two respondents noted that they felt the additional information provided by Featherbank School had added little, and only served to confuse matters.
- 6.8 West End governing body and the public felt there was an imbalance in the text devoted to the changes at each school. The document does provide more information about its specific proposal than was the case for other expansion proposals, and there has been no similar complaint from those. On reflection the space needed to describe the technical detail of the changes at Featherbank and Newlathes may have created this impression. It was not intended to trivialise the changes at West End as the governing body felt.

## **7 Concerns that the consultation was inadequate.**

- 7.1 One issue raised was that pupils entering in 2010 or after were not originally contacted. Some interpreted this as evidence they had been deliberately deceived. This oversight was addressed two weeks into the consultation leaving a further six weeks to respond. At least twelve parents of preschool children responded. Additional drop in meetings at the library and Newlathes school were arranged. Engagement with the pre school community is recognised as vital, and all early years providers in the locality were contacted with details of the consultation. Many pre school children do not use these providers, and are widely dispersed in homes or with childminders. Education Leeds seeks to find effective and good value methods for contacting these families, and has advertised the meetings at doctors' surgeries, libraries, Children's Centres and through press releases to support this.

We will be seeking views from those agencies and others to improve this engagement.

- 7.2 Many felt the consultation period was too short, not advertised sufficiently in advance, and that meetings were too few and too early in the consultation period, all of which combined to prevent people from attending. The consultation ran for eight weeks, which is two weeks longer than is standard practice and exceeds the minimum stated in guidance from the DCSF. The meetings are held towards the beginning of the consultation period to allow maximum opportunity for the public to reflect on the discussions, and consider their responses, and to minimise the period of uncertainty and (often inaccurate) rumour. It is standard practice to offer one public meeting at each school, however additional meetings were arranged by Education Leeds and by Featherbank School, ensuring everyone had the opportunity to ask questions about the alternative transition arrangements which emerged during consultation. Education Leeds acknowledges the concerns, and will provide earlier notification whenever possible.
- 7.3 Some felt an additional preliminary phase would allow more open discussion of the alternatives, and allow the community as a whole to understand the issues, develop and influence the proposals. Education Leeds did engage with schools in the autumn term of 2009 to discuss options for the area collaboratively. Earlier engagement with the wider community can often add undue worry and uncertainty to families and fail to generate a clear consensus. Education Leeds will consider this in future, but believes the critical issue is to consult with schools and early years providers in the initial stages, and to ensure a robust and thorough consultation period to ensure all views are heard.
- 7.4 Some challenged whether more effort should be made to contact local residents and parents at other schools. Education Leeds notes this concern, and needs to ensure the cost of additional measures is justified by the responses and engagement it generates. Over 60 respondents noted resident as a key connection the school, and clearly many parents are also local residents. Anyone is welcome to attend any of the public meetings, in whatever capacity, and irrespective of which school they currently attend. An offer of an additional central meeting at a neutral venue to did not generate any interest from the other schools.
- 7.5 One respondent suggested the use of PowerPoint presentations, and a few suggested the meetings were too emotional, too unstructured and too long. Formal presentations have been used in the past, however it can often add little to what is in the document, and feel like it restricts people's ability to focus on their concerns. Consultation is inevitably emotional, and it is right and proper that parents have an opportunity to express that. Education Leeds tries to allow all who attend to express a view, and continues to review the details of how to approach each meeting on a case by case basis.

7.6 A full list of consultees is in Appendix 1.

## **8 Concerns that the building solutions would not address the holistic requirements of the school, and that schemes would be 'done on the cheap'.**

- 8.1 Modular buildings offer excellent value, excellent quality, a long life span, can be constructed off site minimising disruption on site, and offer greater flexibility in the long term should numbers fall again. They should minimise the possibility of needing any temporary class rooms during construction. Education Leeds fully recognises that expanding a school is not just about adding classrooms, but needs to offer a scheme which allows the school to operate successfully. The building

projects would assess all of the infrastructure requirements of the increased numbers, however it may not be possible to meet all the aspirations of the schools. Detailed building plans will be developed in full consultation with the schools if, following consultation, these proposals proceed, and they will be subject to the normal planning application process. Some internal remodelling may assist in providing a joined up scheme, and the concerns of West End that this should not imply compromise are noted. Particular concerns about the need to address dining space at Newlaithes, and for a joined on building scheme at West End are noted. The concern that the timescale for delivery will prohibit a good design are not shared by Education Leeds.

- 8.2 One respondent noted their child required wheelchair access and portacabins would not be accessible. The proposed modular buildings would be fully accessible.
- 8.3 One noted Education Leeds had provided reassurances that the Out Of School Club would not be left without a suitable space if the proposals went ahead. One suggested this club would not be able to cope with the increased numbers.

## **9 Concerns about safety on site and near to the site during construction.**

- 9.1 Education Leeds has extensive experience of managing building projects at schools and will ensure all works are carried out safely and with minimal possible disruption to schools and their neighbourhoods. Use of modular construction will help minimise the impact.

## **10 Concerns about the suitability of the various sites for the proposed changes.**

- 10.1 A lot of respondents were concerned about the impact on green space and play areas at all of the schools. Schemes will aim to minimise any reduction of playing fields, an issue which need to be addressed in any planning application. Traffic volumes and road safety issues were also of concern for all the schools, and are addressed separately.
- 10.2 Some respondents felt the West End site was too small for any expansion.
- 10.3 Under the proposals the Featherbank site would need to accommodate 210 children, rather than the current 180. The existing buildings could be adapted to meet this need. Featherbank do not have any grass play area, although the school have suggested they would access the local park. Some respondents expressed concern at this. Consideration could also be given to use of other local green space, and one respondent suggested shared use of Newlaithes grounds, and one the use of Astroturf. Many felt this would adversely affect the popularity of the school in the area.
- 10.4 Many parents raised concerns about the safety of smaller children on the site with a full primary age range, especially at play times, and expressed the view that the site was not suitable for the full primary age range. They felt a full school assembly would be intimidating for younger children. In most through primary schools reception children would not play in the same space at the same time as year 6 children, and the school would manage the play times accordingly. There is a large area of hard standing not currently used by the school, which could help to provide separated play areas. Education Leeds is also exploring the possibility of use of the buildings currently used by Park Lane on the Featherbank site, which several respondents and the school felt could offer a positive solution. Many respondents felt the site was more suitable for 270 infants than 210 primary aged children.
- 10.5 Newlaithes would, under these proposals, increase its capacity from 240 to 420

pupils. Significant new building would be required, and an initial appraisal suggests this is feasible at the site, without significantly impacting on the grassed play area or on local residents. There is no intention to use land outside the current school boundary as questioned by one respondent.

10.6 Parents making preferences for year three places in 2011 expressed concern they would need details of the plans to make their preferences. Plans may not be finalised by then, but more information should be available by then.

10.7 One respondent felt that the Newlathes site was unsuitable for small children for unspecified reasons.

## **11 Views that expanding existing schools should be explored in more detail to ascertain whether they are a better solution.**

11.1 There was particular challenge from many as to why Broadgate Lane could not be expanded, as this used to be a two form entry school, and one also suggested Westbrook Lane. All the other schools in the area were considered for expansion, but most were considered hard to expand. Broadgate Primary used to be a larger school, however it now houses the Children's Centre on its grounds. The centre is a valued resource, and reclaiming that property would require the repayment of significant grants, as well as requiring a solution to re-house the Children's Centre. The site itself has narrow access and significant level variations which would add cost and complexity to any project. St Mary's is a Catholic VA school, and the diocese do not require additional Catholic places. St Margaret's CE and Westbrook Lane are on very constrained sites. Expansion on the High School site to accommodate some primary provision has potential logistical difficulties. These options may need to be reappraised if demand continues to grow, but they do not at present offer a logistical or good value solution.

11.2 It was suggested that the move to downsize Broadgate Lane was premature, and it should have been maintained as a two form entry school. This would however have presented a serious challenge to its viability during those years, and delayed the creation of a valuable resource in the Children's Centre. One respondent suggested this indicated an intention to sell the Broadgate Lane site, which is not the case.

11.3 One respondent asked if these schools were brought forward for proposals because they had the most land or were easiest, and another suggested it was also because they were cheapest. The practical and logistical constraints of sites was a key consideration, but tended to rule sites 'out' rather than 'in', and the proposals balanced all the duties of the local authority. One challenged a seeming contradiction that other schools could be ruled out now, but considered later. This reflects the difficulty of balancing all the issues, and the possibility that the decision maker may feel that the challenges at other schools may be less of an issue overall than the concerns raised through consultation, or that they represent a good investment compared to other options if demand continues to grow.

## **12 Concerns about how changes to the status of Newlathes and Featherbank would effect priority for places, most significantly that it would significantly open up access to Horsforth schools for non Horsforth residents.**

12.1 Many expressed the view that expansion should be for local children and not open up access to children in neighbouring areas. Maps provided in Appendix 3 demonstrate that the proposals would not have this effect. The current admissions policy provides priority to children based on their nearest school and straight line distance to a school. Other schools in Rodley and Bramley would remain the

- closest for residents on the far side of the canal. The boundary moves from the river to the canal.
- 12.2 One respondent felt that they don't like the idea of transition, but as they live nearest to Featherbank, they would in effect have an option 'removed'. It is not clear exactly what this means. One commented that schools needed clear advice on their admissions policy. As community schools this the Education Leeds admissions policy would apply.
- 13 Concerns about traffic and access to the sites, particularly at Newlaithes and West End, when and how this is considered in the process and whether the local areas can sustain any increase.**
- 13.1 Many challenged why specific proposals were not included to address serious issues with traffic, which it was felt already presented serious safety concerns to residents and pupils. Many felt these were a prerequisite to any support for any changes. Several felt these concerns ruled out any expansion. This is recognised as an issue and would have to be addressed in any planning application, if there is support for the proposals in principle. The decision maker is able to make a successful planning application a condition of approval of any expansion proposal. Options to mitigate this include the use of drop off zones and walking bus schemes. The car parks at Hall Lane seem to offer a particular opportunity for this for West End. Although several respondents noted that schemes had been tried unsuccessfully in the past, they often felt they should be promoted again.
- 13.2 Some respondents noted that creating through primaries could mitigate some of the traffic issues created by parents with siblings travelling between Featherbank and Newlaithes. One suggested introducing a distance criterion to the admissions policy would reduce traffic (this is already in the policy). Some questioned the possibility of school buses, and this is noted.
- 14 Concerns that the proposals were not supported by the schools and governing bodies.**
- 14.1 West End have made clear their opposition to mixed age classes. They have also made clear their desire for a joined up building solution. They have offered temporary or permanent expansion to 2FE as alternative solutions.
- 14.2 Featherbank have indicated their support for becoming a 1FE primary school, with three caveats: securing funding for the establishment of a Key Stage; the addition of a nursery; and the alternative transition option 2, which allows for full parental choice at the end of year two.
- 14.3 Newlaithes have indicated their support for becoming a 2FE primary school. They noted how it would help in managing their pupil numbers and budgets, allow them to be recognised fully for the 'value added' education they provide, and provide greater control of their own destiny. They have noted concerns that additional funding for a Key Stage is vital, that the building solution will need to address the overall needs of the school and these details have not yet been agreed, that parental choice is key to any transition plan, that site access issues be considered, and that local residents are fully consulted as the proposals develop.
- 14.4 The various head teachers and/or chairs of governors have spoken at the public meetings. They have provided a considered and balanced view on the issues raised, sometimes reflecting on how they were themselves using the consultation process to inform their own views, which have inevitably changed over time as the

debate unfolded. Some have at times suggested that more than one outcome could be satisfactory. This is entirely reasonable, and demonstrates their professional commitment to engaging in the process, and to ensuring a good outcome. The detail of the concerns raised are addressed elsewhere in this document.

**15 Concerns that any expansion would affect the ethos and feel of what are currently three small schools, including particular concerns that 400+ pupils was simply too many.**

15.1 The feel and ethos of the school are created and managed by the governing bodies, and need not necessarily change with expansion. The schools concerned support this principle and do not feel that it would be compromised by expansion. A two form entry primary school is a common model throughout Leeds and many are excellent schools. It can often allow access to a broader range of staff and activities, offering many positive benefits.

**16 Concerns about the impact of mixed age classes arising from a 45 intake, including discussion around expansion by a whole form instead.**

16.1 A range of concerns were expressed by most of the respondents. There was a misconception amongst a few parents that this would result in larger class sizes and/or fewer teachers per pupil. This is not the case. School finances continue to be based around class sizes of 30, and the infant class size legislation would still apply. The difference is in how schools organise the pupils into classes of 30. For example, two year groups of 45 children would make a total of 90 children, which would then be organised into 3 classes of 30. It is up to the school to determine how they would split the children, and how they would then progress through the school. Most common would be one class each from the lower and higher year group, and one which contained a mixture of the two. Some felt that it would directly disrupt existing year groups, however this is highly unlikely, and it would be the cohorts of 45 entering from 2011 onwards who would be directly impacted.

16.2 Specific concerns included the impact on educational outcomes and on the social development and friendships if these groupings change as year groups progress. People were also concerned about a potential age gap of two years between youngest and oldest in a class, and the impact on a child's self esteem of groupings based on ability. These issues concerned many respondents, and they noted an acknowledgement by an Education Leeds officer that mixed age classes were 'less than ideal' or 'a compromise', and as such felt the proposals were not fully justified. Several also felt the attitude of Education Leeds was condescending and arrogant, which was not intended.

16.3 Research on this subject shows mixed results. The school did not feel there would necessarily be an adverse impact socially or educationally, and there are schools nearby with mixed age classes and which are outstanding. Some of these concerns could be mitigated, however all would be the responsibility of the school to manage. These issues lead to the almost universal concern that whatever method was used, and however well the school managed it, it placed an additional teaching and management burden on the school, and presented a very real worry for parents, requiring time for staff to address this. These demands are recognised, and are why mixed age classes were referred to in this way.

16.4 Some felt these concerns about mixed age classes, and the fact it would be the only school in Horsforth with them, would make it the least popular in the area. They felt this would result in children being given places when it was not their first preference, which in turn would lead to a lowering of standards. They also felt it

would result in drawing in pupils from a wider area, exacerbating traffic issues. This last issue is one reason not to over expand in the area.

- 16.5 Several also felt that a change by a whole form of entry would be easier to reverse if numbers fell again in future, as it would not need reorganisation of multiple year groups.
- 16.6 For these reasons many preferred expansion to 2FE, either permanently or temporarily, and this was the position of the governing body. It is felt that a permanent expansion to 2FE at this stage would create too many places in the area, potentially undermining changes in neighbouring schools, although this may be sustainable if some of the housing developments transpire. A temporary expansion is not without merit, and has been given serious consideration. It would allow time to see what happens to the birth rate, and to ensure the sustainability of any long term expansion. It could be agreed for two years without a statutory process. It may however complicate the aspiration for an integrated building solution. It could also create issues with increased sibling intakes in later years which effectively exclude other more local applicants for places. This concern was noted as the reason they opposed a temporary expansion by one respondent.
- 16.7 One respondent claimed there were no disadvantages of 2FE not filling. There is a budgetary implication for any school not filling to whatever admission limit it has, as they need to plan staffing and resource levels around this number, but only get funded for the pupils who actually come into the school. One suggested that an intake of 45 could be accommodated without mixed age classes if smaller classes were used, however school finances are based around a class size of 30 and this would have a major budgetary impact.
- 16.8 One respondent suggested that under the original transition proposal for the changes at Featherbank, it would see surplus space created, which could be used to accommodate bulge years on a temporary basis, and address their concerns about becoming a smaller school. This would however create a problem in later years as the school retained older children and had larger numbers to accommodate. It would also complicate who would receive priority in later years due to a higher sibling rate arising from the bulge years.
- 17 Reduction of choice by removing the infant and junior option in Horsforth, linked with the risks associated with transition between infant and junior, and the alternative of 3FE infant and 3FE junior.**
- 17.1 Many respondents were opposed to the removal of the infant and junior option, feeling that the risks associated with transition between infant and junior schools were recognised and accepted on joining the school, indeed that the progression offered a positive development for the children who were then better prepared for transition to High School. They felt it offered a clear path, understood from the outset. They felt an infant school in particular offered a safe and less intimidating environment for small children, and both schools were a good size. They also felt that this undermined the basic premise for the proposal. Many of these respondents felt a 3FE infant and 3FE junior school was a better proposal, a view that was strongly expressed in the meetings, despite the fact that up to 270 children would be on the constrained Featherbank site, and that more buildings could be needed. Some noted this would allow more time to plan the Newlaithes building scheme. Many felt this would allow staff to focus on their areas of expertise, although the schools themselves have stressed their ability to teach and nurture pupils across the primary age range. This sentiment was very clearly expressed in the meetings, and many felt the results at both schools (but particularly Featherbank)

demonstrated this.

- 17.2 A few noted their opposition to any expansion, even as infant and junior schools.
- 17.3 Many respondents did however support the proposals. They cited the more rounded education that could be offered in a primary, the possibility of a single school for all their primary aged children, the option of going to a nearer school throughout their primary years, and the increased choice between two different schools with two different styles and ethos as their main reasons, in addition to the transition issues. Some did not like the uncertainty introduced by the both of alternative transition arrangements, and felt the original proposal was therefore the best. A few noted that those who opposed a change to primaries may only have younger children, and may not have yet experienced the of reality of disruption due to different training days, travel between sites etc.
- 17.4 One respondent did note a poor experience moving between the schools, a few noted it could be improved, and a few noted that it was a risk they would like to be able to avoid, but as these were their nearest schools with good reputations they had enrolled there anyway.
- 17.5 Education Leeds acknowledges that the schools currently manage this change well, however it remains a risk which would be removed with the introduction of through primaries. It also notes the comments of a few parents that the introduction of two very different schools, with a different ethos, provides an element of choice for parents who otherwise have little chance of accessing a primary school due to their distance to the other primary schools.
- 17.6 Two respondents suggested a single school or a federation of the two existing schools could offer some of the benefits of separate infants and juniors, whilst utilising the two sites more effectively to create the additional capacity. The schools have not supported this option.
- 17.7 Several noted that the disruption to pupils during any transition into primary schools far outweighed any disruption between infant and junior school. Some felt the focus on establishing the new key stage would distract from delivery of a good education to the established key stage, although one commented that the long term benefit of primary schools would outweigh the short term disruption.
- 17.8 One suggested childminders would find it harder to cope with two primary schools. This would be offset by removing the need to travel to both schools for siblings.
- 17.9 One respondent asked about the sibling arrangements, and one suggested that it could disadvantage Featherbank where one child is at Newlaithes and another is preschool – the policy of Education Leeds would continue to apply, and we are happy to answer any specific questions.
- 17.10 One respondent suggested that since 2FE primaries offered greater opportunities it would be unfair to expand to 3FE infant and 3FE junior while other 1FE schools remained in the area. One suggested both schools become 2FE primaries.

## **18 Concerns about the transition arrangements associated with any change to through primaries – parents' views.**

- 18.1 There was very considerable concern that the original proposed transition arrangements which envisaged that Featherbank first became a 1FE infant school prior to growing into a 1FE primary could make the school unattractive to parents

and pupils, and vulnerable to closure. Many felt it would be seen as too small, and unable to offer the full range of activities and support. It would require additional funding to support it in this phase, not needed if other plans were adopted. It was even interpreted by some as intended to undermine the school and then close it. There is no plan to close this school, and the proposals are intended to build on the success and strengths of the two existing schools to increase provision in the area. Some parents did note that it did ensure all peer groups were kept together, and that no child would have its original expectation of transferring to Newlathes in year 3 taken away.

18.2 Many parents felt that whatever transition arrangements were agreed, they should allow full parental choice at the end of year 2, and that parents who had entered that school on the basis of transferring to Newlathes should not have that taken away from them. They also noted the need to ensure learning was not disrupted during the transition.

18.3 Some parents expressed support for an alternative described by Featherbank, which showed an even split of pupils at the end of year 2. This is not enforceable legally, and is therefore not an option. One respondent felt that alternative 1 was best, as it was the only one which ensured Featherbank did not shrink significantly, by limiting the places at Newlathes in year 3.

18.4 The responses demonstrated a wide range of views on all the transition options, reflecting the many implications of any of the possible routes forward. There were different views on the relative viability of the options, but the key issues were that parents should not have the option of continuing to transfer to Newlathes removed from them, and that parental choice should be maximised, meaning the second alternative transition plan had most support (notwithstanding a first preference for an alternative such as 3FE infant and juniors). Despite the uncertainty that this creates, and that it does not guarantee Featherbank does not shrink, the schools have indicated a willingness to manage this.

18.5 One parent asked whether Featherbank would be an infant or primary school in 2011. Under the original transition plan it would be an infant school, under both of the alternative transition plans it would be a primary. See Appendix 4 for more detail.

18.6 There was significant concern of the effect on the first cohort into year three at Featherbank (that they would be the oldest children for several years with no older role models) and the first reception cohort at Newlathes (that they would have only much older children as the next oldest for two years). This would apply to any transition scheme, and was the basis of some people's opposition to conversion to primaries.

## **19 Staffing issues.**

19.1 There were concerns about the impact on Featherbank staff associated with the downsizing prior to growth. Reassurance was provided by Newlathes that they would ring fence any posts for Featherbank staff, and that secondments could also be offered allowing staff to return to Featherbank later. However, as one respondent noted, there would be supplantation of some posts such as deputy head teacher and learning mentor which limited the effectiveness of this offer. It is also true that Newlathes may not need to increase its staffing levels at exactly the same time that Featherbank decreases. Whilst overall the number of posts would increase, there would be considerable disruption to individual staff and to the team at Featherbank if this original transition plan were implemented, which it was felt

would adversely impact on the delivery of education at the school.

- 19.2 There is a more detailed analysis of the implications in the HR and union responses, and these concerns are acknowledged.
- 19.3 Several respondents noted the quality of the staff at both schools. Based on this, one challenged the comment in the consultation document that primaries can find it easier to attract and retain staff due to the greater career opportunities offered.

**20 Concern that Featherbank may not be sustainable in the long term as the least popular school due to site issues, and that it would be closed.**

- 20.1 Education Leeds is bringing forward these proposals precisely because it believes they offer the best long term sustainability. A 2FE school could be downsized in future if necessary, without closing any schools, providing ongoing flexibility and maintaining choice and diversity of provision. At the present time there are no plans to close any school in the area.

**21 Concerns about funding, particularly of a new key stage at Featherbank and Newlaithes.**

- 21.1 The schools and many parents felt strongly that it was unreasonable to expect the normal per pupil funding to provide for the set up of a new Key Stage, and sought assurances the changes would be properly funded. Any compromise on funding would impact on the children's education.
- 21.2 Education Leeds will provide the basic building and infrastructure needs of the schools, such as classrooms, appropriately sized toilets, and circulation space. In general, schools which are expanding are expected to fund new books, tables etc from the per pupil funding, approximately half of which is intended for non teaching staff and resources. It is recognised that the set up of a new key stage could present some additional challenge. Education Leeds is exploring the possibility of additional monies in line with those available when establishing a new school
- 21.3 Education Leeds also notes that a 'reorganisation factor' will apply to ensure that schools which are expanding will have some funding brought forward, ensuring they have the funds in place when additional staff and resources are needed, and they do not have to wait until the following April as is standard.
- 21.4 The governing body at Newlaithes, and one other respondent, noted that a primary offered fuller control of a school's finances, aiding sustainability.

**22 Governing body support of Featherbank school is conditional on Education Leeds support to establish a nursery as part of the proposals.**

- 22.1 The establishment of nursery provision is the responsibility of the Early Years Service within the council, to whom this request has been passed. One parent noted this as desirable, and it was also raised separately by the head teacher.
- 22.3 The other conditions of their support are commented on elsewhere, regarding transition arrangements that allow full parental choice, and funding of a new key stage. The head teacher also made a range of requirements which were not raised by the governing body. They will be discussed with the school, however it may not be possible to meet all of them.

**24 Claims that the response from Featherbank governing body is misleading.**

24.1 The school arranged for a ballot of parents to ascertain their views. Education Leeds has not seen this ballot paper so cannot comment on it. The governing body noted that since less than half of parents responded, it was not possible to say a majority view had emerged. A governor states that there was a 48% response rate and the majority supported 3FE infant and junior schools. It was also claimed that year two parents' views had been down weighted as those children would not be affected, although this failed to acknowledge that they may have younger siblings. Finally they suggested that because per pupil funding varies with age, the overall funding would be 'stretched more' as a primary school. Another respondent suggests the governing body's letter does not reflect the balance of views in the meeting, however it is important to remember many may not choose to speak in that forum.

**25 Reducing the admissions limit at Featherbank reduces the chances of getting in there.**

25.1 This is true, however they would also have opportunity to apply to Newlaithes, so they would have an increased chance of getting a place in a Horsforth school, subject to the admissions policy which includes a distance criterion.

**26 Is the new community unit at Newlaithes part of a joined up plan?**

26.1 This unit was proposed and considered separately to this proposal. It is important that we do not delay positive developments at schools whilst the consultation is underway, but all additional schemes at schools being considered for expansion are assessed in that context to ensure they are mutually compatible.

**27 Views that a better solution would be to share the pupils around all the schools evenly.**

27.1 Whilst this is technically an option, it raises significant issues. It may compromise a school's ability to meet class size pledge. Having exceeded its admissions limit by one or two pupils, a school would then find it difficult to refuse any further requests for places, and it could be forced to admit many more. This may present accommodation issues, and the effects could continue in later years depending on the numbers admitted. This could also distort the expectation of local families in later years when siblings of these 'bulge year' children gain priority over other nearer families

**28 Concern that the associated increased need for High School places be planned for now, minimising disruption to cohorts that will have already faced change during their primary years.**

28.1 Education Leeds is aware of the need to plan for high school places, and engaging in this work. There are many changes which will affect the requirement for space at high schools, and with children increasingly being on the roll of a school but receiving some or all of their education off site this will change the utilisation of space, potentially creating some spare capacity without the need for further building work. Planning for this is ongoing and proposals will be brought forward in due course.

**29 Concern that this does not represent equality of investment, as St Margaret's was recently rebuilt.**

29.1 This school, and several others in the north west were rebuilt with PFI funding to

deliver the removal of surplus places in the primary review. Primary Capital Programme funding is now available to use towards funding sufficiency needs. We are currently engaged in consultation on 25 primary expansions for 2010 and 2011, and whilst the schemes being considered do offer good quality provision, the scale of the investment needed means it is not possible to fund complete rebuilds.

### **30 Questions regarding the decision making process, and the right to object/appeal if parents views are not heard.**

- 30.1 This report summarises the issues raised and gives the revised recommendations from Education Leeds based on those responses. They will be considered by Leeds City Council's Executive Board, who will decide whether to accept them, reject them, or ask for further work. If they are accepted a statutory notice will be published, confirming the details of the final proposals.
- 30.2 This will provide a further opportunity for representations from all stakeholders. Within two months of the end of the notice a final decision must be made by the Exec Board, and a report summarising the representations will be provided to assist in this. There are some limited rights to appeal against this final decision.
- 30.3 To influence the decision prior rather than wait for appeal, it is important that people respond to the consultation AND statutory notice. Education Leeds will keep members of the public informed of developments including any statutory notices through the Education Leeds website [www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation) and through the schools, amongst other ways. To engage further, members of the public are able to attend but not speak at Exec Board meetings. They can make deputations to full council meetings, held approximately bimonthly, or to Area Committee meetings which comprise local councillors for the outer North West wards. Further details of these meetings and how to make deputations have been provided as requested.
- 30.4 Some respondents suggested the opposition of parents and the school to a proposal should imply that a proposal cannot proceed and could be challenged. When making any decision these views will certainly be a critical consideration, must be balanced against all the other duties of the local authority. Many suggested that the decision had already been made, which is not true.
- 30.5 One suggested that schools and governors could have 'their own agendas' and so parents views must be given equal weighting. All views are considered fully in forming the recommendations and making the decision, whoever they are from.

### **31 Concern that a failure to minute all meetings at which proposals are discussed is unprofessional and does not evidence robust analysis of the options.**

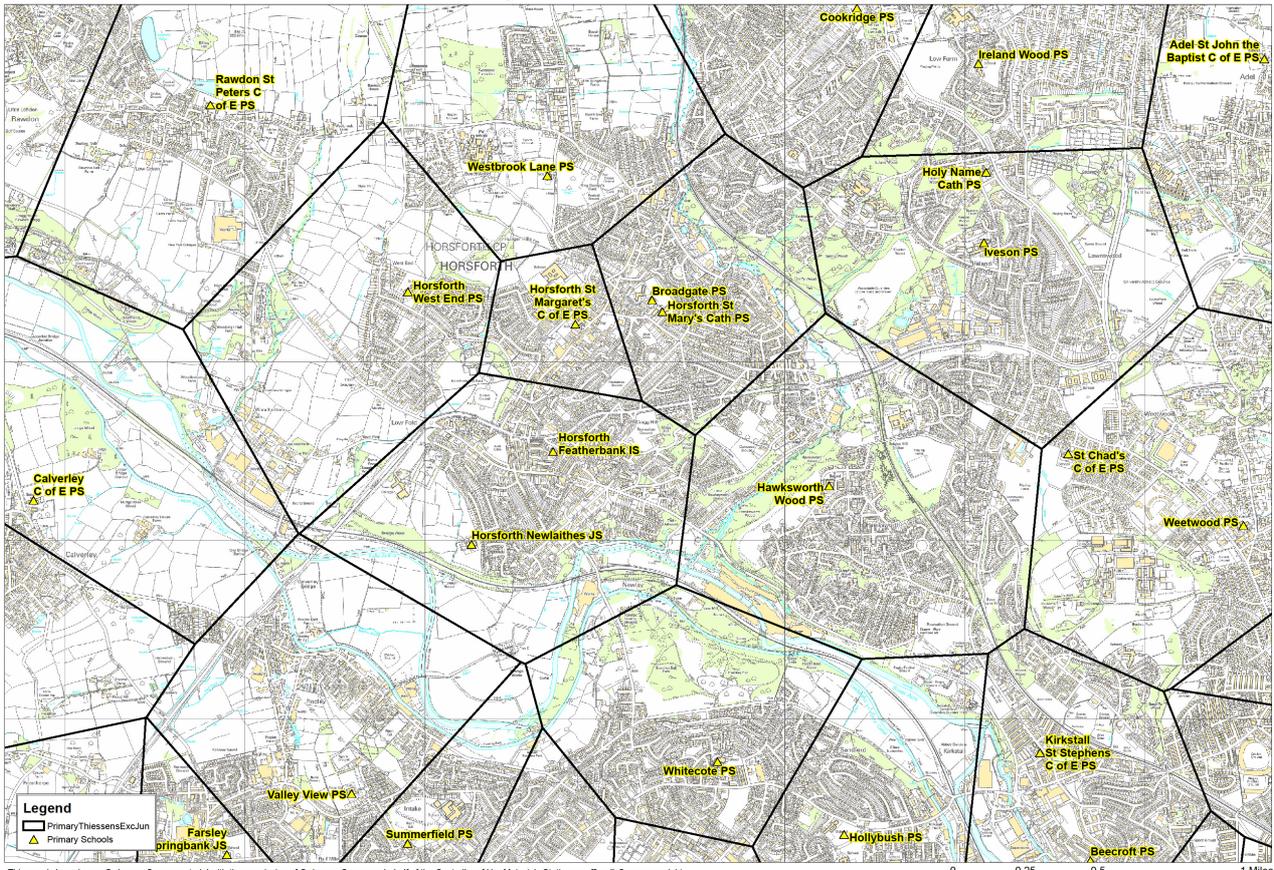
- 31.1 The proposals were developed through a range of working discussions between Education Leeds officers and therefore were not formally minuted meetings. The specific proposals for Horsforth formed part of ongoing city wide work which has involved many discussions throughout the organisation and it is not possible to minute all these discussions. In addition there is no legal requirement for us to minute all meetings. However it is worth noting that the work undertaken for the proposals in Horsforth has been thorough and comprehensive and we have utilised the professional judgement of our staff to present the consultation. This included investigating site plans and the school sites, using officer's professional knowledge of the school sites and buildings, a thorough understanding of legislation

concerned, use of maps, projections and historical preference data.

- 32 Question seeking clarification of position for in year transfers into the 'gap years' during transition to primaries.**
- 32.1 Under the transition plans there would be some year groups which did not exist in each school during transition. Whilst it raises some issues, this does allow schools to plan for their expansion in a gradual and organised manner. Since these groups had not been established as reception intakes at that school, they therefore have no published admission number associated with them. Advice from the DCSF suggests that we could therefore defend any requests for places on the basis that it would compromise the delivery of education. Schools would be able to make requests to accept these pupils, though would need to consider how they could accommodate them, and the fact that once they have let in one child, they would have little defence against admitting more.
- 33 Comment that consideration be given to co-operation between the schools in provision of before and after school club and extended services.**

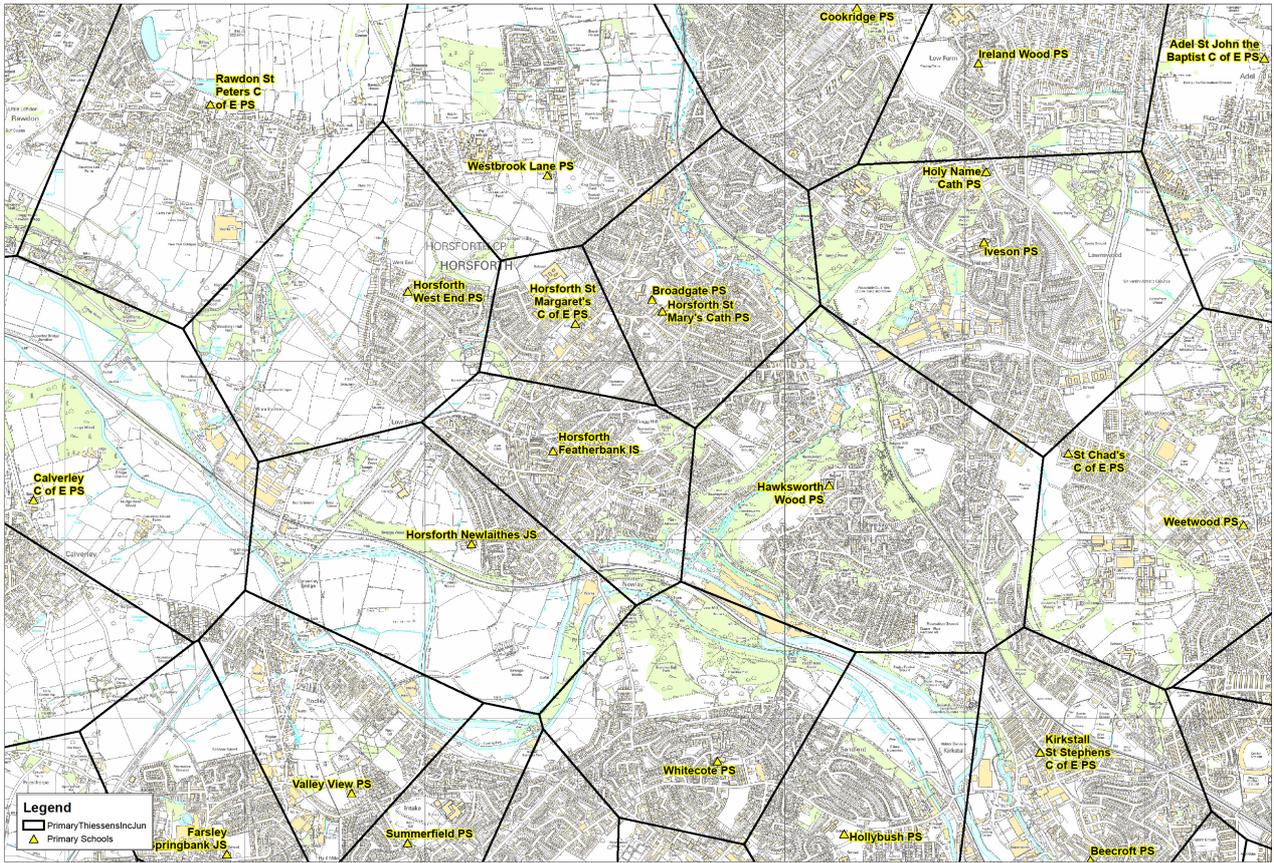
# Appendix 3 – Maps showing ‘nearest’ school currently and as primary schools

## Nearest Schools without Proposed Changes to Primaries



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## Nearest Schools with Proposed Changes to Primaries



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## Appendix 4 – transition alternatives

The differences between the transition plans are in the timing of when Featherbank raises its upper age limit to 11, and in how many additional places are offered in year 3 at Newlathes for the duration of the transition.

Under the **original proposal** all children who had joined the infant school expecting to go to Newlathes in year 3 continue to do so. Peer groups are not disturbed. All children entering either school in 2011 onwards stay there until transition to High School. The plan maximises certainty of pupil numbers and therefore allows clear planning for staffing and building works. There is however a significant adverse impact on staffing at Featherbank. Financial support would be required to protect the school as numbers fell.

**Alternative 1:** Increasing the upper age limit of Featherbank at the outset and restricting the places in year 3 at Newlathes to 30 ensures neither school shrinks throughout the transition. It introduces some element of parental choice at the end of year 2. If more than 30 wish to transfer the admissions policy will determine who gets a place. It will disrupt peer groups, and it introduces uncertainty to the transition.

**Alternative 2 (now the recommended solution):** Increasing the upper age limit of Featherbank at the outset and maintaining 60 places in year 3 at Newlathes ensures all parents have complete free choice about staying in Featherbank or moving to Newlathes in year 3. It therefore cannot guarantee that Featherbank does not shrink, and that financial support would not therefore be needed, but in all probability some would choose each school and numbers will not drop as significantly. Peer group disruption and uncertainty remain.

Legal step	Initial proposal 'preferred option'	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
<i>Featherbank raises upper age limit to 11</i>	<i>Sept 2014</i>	<i>Sept 2011</i>	<i>Sept 2011</i>
Featherbank reduces admissions limit to 30	Sept 2011	Sept 2011	Sept 2011
Newlathes reduces lower age limit to 5, with (reception) admissions limit of 60	Sept 2011	Sept 2011	Sept 2011
<i>Newlathes reduces additional entry in year 3 to 30 places</i>	<i>NA – still admits 60 in year 3</i>	<i>Sept 2011</i>	<i>NA – still admits 60 in year 3</i>
Newlathes admits final group into year 3	Sept 2013	Sept 2013	Sept 2013
All year groups established in Featherbank	Sept 2017	Sept 2014*	Sept 2014*
All year groups established in Newlathes	Sept 2013	Sept 2013*	

\* Note this cannot be guaranteed. Because all children already on roll at Featherbank have the legal right to stay, there is uncertainty about where the larger cohorts on roll in Featherbank in September 2010 may choose to move to in year 3. It is possible (though highly unlikely) that it could take until 2017 for all year groups at either school to be established.

The following tables show how places would vary by year groups under the three different options.

