

Agenda Item:

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REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 19 May 2010

SUBJECT: Response to the Children's Services Scrutiny Inquiry Report on Meadowfield Primary School

Electoral Wards Affected:

All
Temple Newsam
Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

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

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 This report provides Executive Board with a summary of the recommendations from the recent Children's Services Scrutiny Inquiry into Meadowfield Primary School (reported at the Board's meeting on 10 February 2010) and summarises how Education Leeds, on behalf of the Director of Children's Services, proposes to respond to the recommendations. The report asks the Executive Board to approve the proposed response.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 In January 2009, Mike Shaw Chair of Governors at Meadowfield School requested a scrutiny inquiry into issues relating to the capital building project to deliver Meadowfield Primary School and Children's Centre in 2005, following the amalgamation of two primary schools.

2.2 Scrutiny Board appointed a working party to identify and recommend the areas of focus for the inquiry. The working party identified and the Board agreed the scope of the inquiry would consider:

- Project Management arrangements
- The Education Leeds complaints procedure
- How relationship issues are addressed through the accountability arrangements between Leeds City Council and Education Leeds
- Fees in respect of the capital building project
- The new school playing field

2.3 The full scrutiny inquiry report is attached at appendix 1.

2.4 The report identifies six recommendations for action. Education Leeds, on behalf of the Director of Children's Services, has accepted these recommendations and actions are underway or planned to address them. The issues identified during the inquiry have contributed to the lessons learned in respect of the delivery of current and future capital projects.

3.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

3.1 Each of the Scrutiny Board's six recommendations is summarised below with a response from Education Leeds. The implementation of the Children's Services review will incorporate some of the processes described in the recommendations, leading to new performance management and other procedures.

3.2 Recommendation One

That Education Leeds revises its complaints procedure to incorporate a specific section for school complaints, including an appropriate third stage review process.

Education Leeds will work within the context of Children's Services to ensure that the recommendation is incorporated into the Leeds City Council procedure.

3.3 Recommendation Two

That the revised complaints procedure referred to in recommendation 1 includes information about how a school may refer a matter such as a building project concern to the accountability arrangements between Education Leeds and Leeds City Council.

A complaint or concern about a building related matter will be reported through the revised complaints procedure detailed above. These issues can be raised with the Chief Executive of Education Leeds at any time and with the Director of Children's Services.

3.4 Recommendation Three

That Education Leeds ensures that the amount of fees to be allocated from within each building project budget is made clear to all parties.

This issue has already been addressed and is now part of the project management governance for a scheme.

3.5 Recommendation Four

That Education Leeds confirms the actions agreed with the school to sign off the agreed list of outstanding issues at paragraph 43, and the timetable to complete these actions.

The Director of Learning Environments and Planning met with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Meadowfield School on 13 May 2009 and agreed a list

of six actions in respect of Meadowfield School. These are either completed or in the process of resolution.

3.6 Recommendation Five

That Education Leeds benchmarks the maintenance costs at Meadowfield Primary School with other similar schools in order to assess whether they are significantly higher.

Meadowfield Primary School provided information in January 2010 and one of the other two schools in the procurement package in February 2010. Education Leeds will scope, obtain comparative data and commence a benchmarking exercise to be completed by the start of September 2010.

3.7 Recommendation Six

That Education Leeds reports back to the Scrutiny Board on the handover process for new school buildings and alterations to existing buildings where appropriate.

Education Leeds expects five new build schools to be handed over by different partners, the Strategic Design Alliance (SDA) and Leeds Local Education Partnership (LEP) during 2010, 2011 and 2012, and for three major capital projects at primary schools and the Leeds West Academy to be handed over by the LEP during 2011/12. Education Leeds will report back to the Scrutiny Board on the handover process with different partners in respect of these major projects after their completion.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

4.1 There are no specific implications for Council Policy and Governance.

5.0 **LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There is no specific budget provision for any works at Meadowfield or either of the other two schools. The reimbursement of the cost of flooring at Meadowfield will be met from the general refurbishment budget.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the proposed responses to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations.

Background Papers

There are no background papers relating to this report other than the Scrutiny Inquiry report included at appendix 1.