

**Report of Director of Children's Services / Deputy Chief Executive / Director of City Development**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 23 September 2015**

**Subject: Outcome of consultation to increase primary school places in Pudsey/Swinnow**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s) Pudsey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

This report contains details of proposals brought forward to meet the local authority's duty to ensure sufficiency of school places. The changes that are proposed form prescribed alterations under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and accompanying statutory guidance set out the process which must be followed when making such changes. The statutory process to make these changes varies according the nature of the change and status of the school and the process followed in respect of these proposals is detailed in this report. The decision maker in these cases remains the local authority.

Executive Board agreed in February 2014 a process whereby a stakeholder consultation event using Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) methodology informs consultation on options for an area, from which a route forward will be determined.

An event was held on 23 January 2015 to discuss the options for increasing school places in Pudsey/Swinnow. Following the event a two week on line discussion process was carried out. Subsequently an option emerged to expand Park Spring Primary school. Consultation on this preferred option was then conducted from 8 June to 3 July 2015.

## **Recommendations**

Executive Board is asked to:

- Approve the publication of a Statutory Notice to expand Park Spring Primary School from a capacity of 315 pupils to 420 pupils with an increase in the admission number from 45 to 60 with effect from September 2017.
- Note the responsible officer for implementation is the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Lead.

### **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report contains details of proposals brought forward to meet the local authority's duty to ensure sufficiency of school places. This report describes the outcome of consultation regarding proposals to expand primary school provision at Park Spring and seeks permission to publish a statutory notice in respect of these proposals.

### **2 Background information**

- 2.1 A stakeholder consultation event using Outcomes Based Accountability methodology was held on 23 January 2015 to discuss options for increasing school places in Pudsey/Swinnow. Those invited included local head teachers, Ward Members, school governors, parent representatives, local authority officers and representatives from the diocesan education boards. Data about birth rates, housing, and parental preferences for schools was shared.
- 2.2 The event provided an opportunity to allow for discussion amongst small groups of stakeholders, and for options to be suggested. Although the focus was on primary provision, the event also provided the opportunity to discuss the need for Free Early Education places for eligible 2 and 3-4 year olds as well as specialist places for children with special educational needs.
- 2.3 Participants agreed that there was a need for an additional form of entry across the Pudsey/Swinnow area and suggestions put forward at the event included expanding Greenside Primary School from 1.5FE to 2FE, expanding Park Spring Primary School from 1.5FE to 2FE, expanding Southroyd Primary School from 2FE to 3FE, establish primary school provision on a new site in the Pudsey/Swinnow area, establish a through-school with one of the secondary schools in the Pudsey/Swinnow area and acquiring the old Hough Side High School site to create additional provision.
- 2.4 SEN and Early Years provision was also considered as part of the stakeholder event.

- 2.5 Following the event, an online forum was established using Wordpress, seeking views from any interested parties on all these options. 24 responses were received. Taking into account the feedback received, local demographics, the preference patterns of families, the physical deliverability of build solutions and the location of new housing under construction, support of the schools, and educational outcomes, a preferred option emerged to expand Park Spring Primary School.
- 2.6 Consultation on this option took place from 8 June 2015 to 3 July 2015. This included use of the WordPress on line forum and the Council's Talking Point survey system. A number of drop-in sessions were held to discuss the proposals. The drop-in sessions were attended by parents, local residents and other stakeholders. Information was distributed widely, including through the school, Early Years providers, on websites and at public places in the locality (Morrison's supermarket at Swinnow, Pudsey Leisure centre and Pudsey Wellbeing Centre) and a banner was placed at the school to advertise the consultation. Leaflets were distributed to local residents. Meetings were held with the governors, staff and school council of Park Spring Primary School.

### **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The expansion of Park Spring Primary School is proposed as it is a good school in an area of high demographic need. The school took a temporary additional cohort of 15 children in 2014 and had agreed to do the same in 2015 and 2016. The school benefits from successful leadership and management and the pupils there are making good progress. Disadvantaged pupils are doing especially well.
- 3.2 During the consultation period there were 30 written responses received and one response submitted via Talking Point. In total there were 30 responses in support of the proposal with one response neither supporting nor opposing it. A summary of the issues raised follows. A copy of the responses received can be requested from the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Team at [educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk). The Governing Body of Park Spring Primary School supports the proposal.
- 3.3 In response to the consultation there were supportive comments received about the school and some respondents commented that the proposal would enhance the facilities offered there. A number of respondents commented that the proposal is a good idea and one said that it would be a positive development for the community. As part of the proposal, one option is to create a new access point to the school off Swinnow Lane and a number of respondents stated that this is a good idea as it will relieve traffic and parking pressures on Wellstone Avenue (currently the only access point to the school site) by providing additional parking and a drop-off area. One respondent said that if a new access point were created it would improve safety.

- 3.4 The concerns raised by respondents are listed as follows;
- 3.4.1 **Concern:** That teaching space will be lost in the Early Years unit and this will lead to the teaching practices currently in place having to change radically. Currently the nursery space is large enough to be used for both nursery and reception. If this space was re-provided as part of a new accommodation solution it would lead to the Nursery and Early Years areas becoming separated, having a negative impact on the school and detracting from what should be a positive development.
- 3.4.2 **Response:** It is proposed the required building works to facilitate the expansion of Park Spring Primary school will be positioned on the current location of the existing Early Years provision. The building works will include purpose built accommodation that will be of sufficient size for staff to effectively deliver the EYFS curriculum. Consultation with key stakeholders will be undertaken during the design stages to ensure current teaching practises are recognised and accommodated in line with the latest guidance for mainstream schools.
- 3.4.3 **Concern:** With potentially two entrance/exit points to the site there is a risk to children's safety as a child might enter at one point and exit at the other without an adult being aware, especially at busy times of the school day.
- 3.4.4 **Response:** The safeguarding of pupils is a key responsibility for the school and the Local Authority. The creation of a second access point onto the school site will reduce the current congestion off Wellstone Avenue and provide the opportunity to design secure access routes that will separate vehicular and pedestrian access to and from the school site. The most recent Ofsted report states that governors ensure that the school keeps pupils safe and that statutory requirements to safeguard pupils are being met. Were an additional entrance point to be created to the site, the governors would continue to ensure that effective systems are in place to safeguard pupils.
- 3.4.5 **Concern:** The consultation was focussed on too many ideas and possibilities rather than proposing a concrete plan.
- 3.4.6 **Response:** The consultation phase is focussed on the principle of expansion rather than the final build solution, which is why a number of options can form part of the discussion at this stage. Interested parties have the opportunity to comment on proposed designs at the planning application stage.
- 3.4.7 **Concern:** The potential loss of space for nurture activities and the before/after school club
- 3.4.8 **Response:** Before/after school care will continue to be provided. The accommodation unit used for after school care (known as "The Cool Hut") is one of the units that would potentially be demolished to make way for the proposed new accommodation block. If this were the case, an equivalent space would be re-provided as part of the project. Increased demand for out of school provision is expected, if the proposal to expand Park Spring is approved. The Local Authority's sufficiency duty extends to that of sufficient childcare for working parents and discussions would take place between development officers and

local providers with a view to increasing the level of provision in the area, were the proposed expansion to go ahead. The proposed accommodation solution would seek to include provision for small-group activities.

- 3.4.9 **Concern:** That sufficient provision will be made for disabled children including suitable car parking space
- 3.4.10 **Response:** Any new accommodation would meet DDA guidelines. The proposed new car parking area at the Swinnow Lane entrance to the site would include provision for disabled parking. This would be identified as part of the planning application stage.
- 3.4.11 **Concern:** Improved parking and drop off arrangements are needed.
- 3.4.12 **Response:** It is acknowledged there are traffic issues and inconsiderate parking in the vicinity of the school can be an issue for local residents, particularly at the start and end of the school day. Traffic and parking surveys would be undertaken to determine a solution required for the school; however the proposed expansion includes the creation of a new access point to the school off Swinnow Lane, staff parking and a drop-off area. Traffic and parking surveys would be considered as part of the planning application.
- 3.4.13 **Concern:** Children's education will be disrupted due to the amount of building work required
- 3.4.14 **Response:** There is no evidence to suggest that education would be disrupted. Building work will need to take place to create additional accommodation and wherever possible very noisy work would be carried out in school holidays. It is inevitable that some work will have to be carried out during term-time, however the school would function as normal during such building work. The location of the new accommodation block means that this area of the site can be completely segregated from the rest of the school, with temporary accommodation provided on part of the school field while the building work is carried out. The local authority has extensive experience of managing building projects on school sites and would draw on this should the proposals progress to ensure minimal disruption.
- 3.4.15 **Concern:** In wet weather a narrow path near to the main entrance door floods and parents/carers and children are forced to walk through the water at the start and end of the school day. This situation would potentially be worse if there were more children in school because the path would be more crowded.
- 3.4.16 **Response:** As part of the proposed expansion all access and egress from the site will be reviewed which includes rectifying some condition issues such as flooding (on main access routes).

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The process in respect of all the proposals has been managed in accordance with the relevant legislation and with local good practice.
- 4.1.2 Consultation included a stakeholder event and a two week period of on-line consultation on the WordPress site on the range of options which emerged from the stakeholder event. This was followed by a four week period of on-line consultation on the preferred options supported by use of the councils Talking Point system. The consultation included drop in sessions for parents/carers, residents and other stakeholders at Park Spring Primary School.
- 4.1.3 The drop-in sessions were information sharing sessions and also provided an opportunity for parents/carers, residents and other stakeholders to ask questions. Officers from Highways supported officers from Children's Services at these sessions. Drop in sessions were held at the beginning and end of the school day to talk to parents before and after they dropped off their children. A drop in session was also held in the evening.
- 4.1.4 Meetings were also held with the school council, staff and governing body of Park Spring Primary School. Other local schools were engaged in the stakeholder event and in the on-line consultation.
- 4.1.5 Ward members were formally consulted during the public consultation stage, to both ensure awareness of all proposals city wide and to improve understanding of the impact of proposals in neighbouring areas. No concerns were raised. The consultation document for this proposal can be found at: <https://leedsschoolplaceplanning.wordpress.com/category/pudseyswinnow/> or requested from the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Team at: [educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk).

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 The EDCI form for Park Spring Primary School has been completed and is attached as an appendix to this report.

### **4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 The proposals are being brought forward to meet the Council's statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for all the children in Leeds. Providing places close to where children live allows improved accessibility to local and desirable school places, and thus reduces the risk of non-attendance.
- 4.3.2 The proposal contributes to the city's aspiration to be the Best Council and the Best City in which to grow up; a Children Friendly City. The delivery of pupil places through the Basic Need Programme is one of the most baseline entitlements of a Child Friendly City, by creating good quality local places. A good quality school place contributes to the achievement of targets within the Children and Young People's Plan such as our obsession to 'improve behaviour, attendance and achievement'. It is therefore important that when bringing any

proposal forward, there is a degree of certainty that any change would not have a negative impact on the teaching and learning in the school. Park Spring Primary School was rated 'Good' by Ofsted at its most recent inspection.

- 4.3.3 Further objectives of the Best Council Plan 2013-2017 are 'Supporting communities and tackling poverty and 'Become a more efficient and enterprising council. Choice and diversity for parents and families is promoted by responding to the needs of communities, by delivering additional school places in the areas where families need them. Meeting these expectations while demonstrating the five values underpinning all we do is key to the basic need programme.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 An indicative budget for the proposed Park Spring Primary School expansion project is estimated at £3.9m based on a high-level calculation that considers the amount of new build, external works and associated fees. Once the feasibility stage is complete and moves towards the detailed design phase the budget will be realigned to reflect the design freeze or pre-tender estimate which will take account of site investigations and survey information. To facilitate the proposed expansion of Park Spring Primary school the existing modular accommodation, which has reached the end of its design life, will be demolished to make way for a purpose-built accommodation block. The work will also include the development of a new access point onto the school site which will alleviate current highways congestion along Wellstone Avenue. During the proposed works, temporary classroom accommodation would be provided some distance from the building works to support the continued delivery of the curriculum and allow a safe construction compound.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 The processes that have been and will be followed are in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, and amended by School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.
- 4.5.2 This report is subject to call in.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 The proposals to increase primary provision in Pudsey/Swinnow have been brought forward in time to allow places to be delivered for 2017.
- 4.6.2 A decision not to proceed at this stage would mean fresh consultation on new proposals, and would mean places may not be delivered in time. The authority's ability to meet its statutory duty for sufficiency of school places in the short term may also be at risk.
- 4.6.3 There is a corporate risk associated with failing to provide sufficient school places in good quality buildings that meet the needs of local communities.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 Our ambition is to be the best city in the country. As a vibrant and successful city we will attract new families to Leeds, and making sure that we have enough school places for the children is one of our top priorities. These proposals have been brought forward to meet that need, and following the appropriate consultation we now seek to move them to the next stage. They would ensure that children in Leeds would have the best possible start to their learning, and so deliver our vision of a child friendly city.
- 5.2 The issues raised during consultation regarding the expansion of Park Spring Primary School have been considered, and on balance, the proposal remains strong. It addresses the need for school places in the area.
- 5.3 The proposal has been supported during the public consultation, and although some concerns were raised, no respondents objected to it. This report demonstrates how the concerns raised may be addressed.
- 5.4 The additional places are required to ensure the authority meets its legal requirement to ensure sufficiency of primary provision for September 2017. There is evidence of local need for places and it is therefore recommended that the proposal be approved.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to:
- Approve the publication of a Statutory Notice to expand Park Spring Primary School from a capacity of 315 pupils to 420 pupils with an increase in the admission number from 45 to 60 with effect from September 2017.
  - Note the responsible officer for implementation is the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Lead.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.