

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

Report to Executive Board

Date: 18 November 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 the Pudsey/Swinnow area. Following the event a two week on-line discussion process was carried out and an option emerged to expand Park Spring Primary School. Consultation on this took place from 8 June to 3 July 2015 and a statutory notice period in respect of the proposed expansion ran from 5 October to 9 November 2015.

Subsequently, to further address the need for additional primary school places in the Pudsey/Swinnow area an option has emerged to expand Greenside Primary School. Consultation on this option was conducted from 14 September to 9 October 2015.

Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

- Approve the publication of a Statutory Notice to expand Greenside 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 Greenside 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. Information about birth rates, children currently aged under 5 living in the Pudsey/Swinnow area, housing, and admissions data which included 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 (forms of entry), 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, an option emerged to expand Park Spring Primary School. Consultation on this took place from 8 June 2015 to 3 July 2015 and a statutory notice in respect of the proposals was published from 5 October to 9 November 2015. Subsequently a further option has emerged to expand Greenside Primary School.
- 2.6 A public consultation on the option to expand Greenside Primary School took place from 14 September to 9 October 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 including a local Ward Member. Information was distributed widely including through the school, via other local schools, via Early Years providers, on websites (Leeds City Council, Family Information Service, Twitter and Facebook) and at public places in the locality. Banners were placed at the school to advertise the consultation and leaflets were distributed to local residents. Meetings were held with the governors, staff and school council of Greenside Primary School.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The expansion of Greenside Primary School is proposed as it is a popular and successful school in an area of high demographic need. The school benefits from successful leadership and management and the pupils there are making good progress. The most recent Ofsted rating for the school is “Good”.
- 3.2 During the consultation period there were 43 written responses received and three responses submitted via Talking Point. In total there were 36 responses in support of the proposal and 10 responses objecting to it. A summary of the issues raised follows and a copy of the responses received can be requested from the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Team at educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk.
- 3.3 The Governing Body of Greenside Primary School has given its full support to the proposals.
- 3.4 In response to the consultation there were comments made acknowledging the need for additional school places in Pudsey. Some respondents felt that the proposed expansion would offer benefits to the school as well as to the local community and would provide much-needed school places for local families. Some respondents felt that if the school expanded and was therefore able to organise teaching in to single year groups this would be beneficial to the children at the school and preferable to the current system of mixed-age range teaching groups.
- 3.5 The concerns raised by respondents are listed as follows;
- 3.5.1 **Concern:** The existing out of school club on the school site would not have sufficient places for the number of families wishing to use it.
- 3.5.2 **Response:** During this consultation period, officers from the Early Years Sufficiency Team met with the on-site provider to discuss the need for additional out of school club provision. This forms part of a city-wide audit of out of school provision that is currently being undertaken by these officers. In this area we are aware that the majority of out of school clubs are at capacity, and adding additional school places to any school will increase the demand for this provision. The provision on the site of Greenside is being assessed to determine whether there are options to increase capacity as part of a scheme to expand the school. In addition, there are other providers of out of school care nearby and as part of the sufficiency audit being carried out for the Pudsey area these will be considered to determine whether additional capacity can be created.

3.5.3 **Concern:** The existing playground area is already too small and green space on the site may be lost to make way for additional accommodation.

3.5.4 **Response:** It is perceived by some parents that the current playground area is too small for an expansion to 2FE. The playground area at Greenside is approximately 1659m² and Building Bulletin (BB99) guidelines recommend that a standard playground area should be at least 1030m² for a 2FE school. The school however is lacking in specific games courts which the project could address with the creation of an all-weather pitch or MUGA (Multi Use Games Area), providing all year round use.

For the development of any new accommodation, the need to be compact and efficient is a high priority. The intention with this scheme is to expand into the eaves of the existing school building, thus creating as little reduction as possible to the external areas.

Greenside Primary School makes good use of the outside space it currently has and has recently established a very successful outside classroom space on a woodland site approximately 300m from the school. Some of the pupils are engaged in the Forest Schools initiative and many children participate in outdoor-based enrichment activities. The school also takes groups of children to Pudsey Park for outside learning activities and makes use of the sports facilities at a local secondary school. The school promotes engagement in sporting activities and often has groups of children participating in joint school competitions and training sessions including regular football training at the school. Were the school to expand, the emphasis on outside learning and physical activity would remain and the head teacher and governing body are confident that they could continue to give all pupils a range of opportunities to access outside space.

3.5.5 **Concern:** The school hall is insufficiently sized for a 1.5FE school. With more children at the school there would be increased pressure on hall space making it more difficult for whole-school activities and events to take place.

3.5.6 **Response:** The school hall at Greenside is approximately 17m² smaller than is recommended by Building Bulletin (BB99) guidelines for a 2FE school. All options for remodelling areas within the school / adjacent to the hall would be considered at the design stage to maximize use of existing space available. It may also be possible for the school to make alterations to how the hall space is used in order to improve its functionality e.g. by staggering the lunch break or reorganising when and how it is used for assemblies and PE.

3.5.7 **Concern:** There would be a detrimental effect upon the “togetherness” ethos of the school.

3.5.8 **Response:** Greenside is a successful and popular school and creating additional places here would give more local families the opportunity to benefit from the high standards of teaching and learning at the school.

It is acknowledged that some parents and staff at the school have concerns about how the sense of a whole school community might change were the proposed expansion to go ahead. However, the head teacher and governing body are keen to retain the ethos of the school and are confident that they could manage any changes successfully without any detriment to the sense of “togetherness” that exists within the school. They would be able to draw upon the experience of colleagues from other schools that have expanded when considering how to retain a suitable atmosphere.

- 3.5.9 **Concern:** There would be insufficient circulation space and insufficient accommodation, in particular for intervention, ICT and community use.
- 3.5.10 **Response:** Additional classrooms and indoor spaces created would need to conform to minimum building requirements and wherever possible, the ancillary facilities required to successfully deliver the curriculum for a modern school would be provided. As part of the design phase, requirements for facilities such as toilets, library, ICT suite and kitchen provision would be assessed and where necessary, improvements or additions made. The school would be fully engaged in the design phase and careful consideration would be given to understanding how the design of the build could help the school to operate as effectively as possible.
- 3.5.11 **Concern:** The kitchen facilities are already inadequate and having more children in school would make the situation even worse.
- 3.5.12 **Response:** The school kitchen at Greenside is currently undersized. As the kitchen is too small for food preparation, school dinners are brought in from another school and served at Greenside. The school is therefore able to provide hot meals for all of the children who choose to have them. However, were the school to expand, the size of the kitchen would be reviewed as part of the design process. Designs would be developed to provide the school with sufficient kitchen accommodation to fulfil Building Bulletin (BB99) guidelines in respect of the preparation and serving of food.
- 3.5.13 **Concern:** There would be an increased risk to children’s safety caused by inconsiderate parking and volume of traffic in the vicinity of the school.
- 3.5.14 **Response:** Children’s Services have had discussions with highways colleagues about the need to ensure that the impact on the surrounding road and footpath infrastructure is minimised in so far as this is possible. Options that could be considered include extended opening times; staggered pick up and drop off times; walking buses; and options for parents to park further away from the school and walk. As part of the initial design process, an unused area to the rear of the school has been identified as a possible location to establish some on-site staff car parking. The governing body are very keen to reduce the number of children travelling to school by car and as part of their green travel plan investigate a walking bus scheme that has previously been in operation.
- 3.5.15 **Concern:** The footpath that bisects the school site should be closed to allow for better use of the outside space. The path poses a safeguarding risk as children

have to cross it to access the school field. It is often dirty and suffers from dog-fouling and is therefore unpleasant and hazardous for children.

- 3.5.16 **Response:** For the footpath to be closed an application would need to be made on the grounds that i) the path is not needed ii) it needs to be closed to protect pupils or staff from violence or threat of violence, harassment, alarm or distress arising from unlawful activity or other risk to their health and safety arising from such activity iii) to allow for development over it. In this case the most relevant reason for a closure application would be to allow for development over the path, which would be done at the planning application stage. If the proposed expansion went ahead and the final design incorporated building work over the path area then an application for closure of the path could be made. At this stage the closure of this right of way is not a requirement for this proposal to progress.
- 3.5.17 **Concern:** The reception class base and playground area would not be large enough.
- 3.5.18 **Response:** The size of the current reception class base is only slightly smaller than that recommended by Building Bulletin (BB99) guidelines for a 2FE school and there is the potential to extend it by utilising a classroom space that adjoins it. All options for developing the reception class base would be carefully considered at the design stage, working closely with the school throughout the design process.

The current reception playground is adequately sized for a 2FE school and has the potential to be developed further by integrating soft play and grassed areas within it.

- 3.5.19 **Concern:** Greenside school should have a “catchment area” to prevent children who live further away from the school gaining a place there.
- 3.5.20 **Response:** The Leeds City Council admissions policy uses a nearest priority, which means that local children living nearest to a particular school are prioritised for a place over non-nearest. Some families do not preference their nearest school, which may lead to places being available for other families. In this case, available places are allocated to children who have expressed a preference for a place on the basis of distance from the school. A catchment area policy would work in a similar way to the nearest priority and would not restrict places from being available for children who live outside of it. To amend the Leeds City Council admissions policy there would have to be a city-wide consultation.

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 council's Talking Point system. The consultation included drop in sessions for parents/carers, residents and other stakeholders at Greenside 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 Greenside 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. Local ward members have given their full support to the proposal.
- 4.1.6 The consultation document for this proposal can be found at: <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Currentconsultation.aspx> or requested from the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Team at: educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The EDCI form for Greenside 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 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. Greenside Primary School was rated 'Good' by Ofsted at its most recent inspection.
- 4.3.3 Further objectives of the Best Council Plan 2015-2020 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 To facilitate the proposed expansion of Greenside Primary school the intention is to utilise the existing roof void within the main building for the additional classrooms. A previous expansion of this nature was completed a number of years ago when the roof void in the opposite part of the building was used to develop additional classrooms. This expansion was commissioned by the school. A viability survey is due to take place by our technical consultants (NPS) to determine whether this approach is feasible for the proposed scheme. Should the development in the roof void be unachievable, the required accommodation could be delivered by constructing a new accommodation block to the rear of the school on the footprint of the existing Early Years/Out of School Care provision. If this were the preferred design option, the Early Years/Out of School Care provision would be re-provided within the new accommodation block.

4.4.2 It is not possible at this stage to quantify an indicative budget for the proposed Greenside Primary School expansion project because of the uncertainties described above. A previous estimate of £2.5m gave an early indication of the indicative cost to expand the school by 0.5FE, given the particular constraints of this site. Once the feasibility stage is complete and the scheme 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.

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. There are limited options in this area for creating additional places and were the proposed scheme not to go ahead, the authority's ability to meet its statutory duty for sufficiency of school places in the short term may 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 Greenside 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, with the majority of respondents (36 out of 46) supporting 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

Executive Board is asked to:

- Approve the publication of a Statutory Notice to expand Greenside 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 documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ 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.