

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to Executive Board

Date: 27 July 2016



Subject: Outcome of consultation to increase learning places at Beecroft Primary School

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Kirkstall		
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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

- This report contains details of a proposal 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.
- A stakeholder event was held in March 2015 to discuss the options for increasing school places in Kirkstall / Burley / Hawksworth. Following the event, an online discussion was carried out to include the wider community and allow for discussions to take place on the suggestions that had emerged from the stakeholder event. Following this online discussion and a more detailed review of the demographics and site viability, a preferred option emerged to expand Beecroft Primary School. A public consultation took place on this proposal from 18 January to 12 February 2016.

Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

- Approve the publication of a Statutory Notice to permanently expand Beecroft Primary School from a capacity of 210 pupils to 315 pupils with an increase in the admission number from 30 to 45 with effect from September 2017.
- Note the responsible officer for implementation is the Head of Learning Systems.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report contains details of a proposal 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 Beecroft Primary School and seeks permission to publish a statutory notice in respect of this proposal.

2 Background information

- 2.1 A stakeholder consultation event using Outcomes Based Accountability methodology was held on 17 March 2015 to discuss options for increasing school places in the Kirkstall / Burley / Hawksworth area. 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 1.5 forms of entry across the Kirkstall / Burley / Hawksworth areas and possible suggestions put forward at the event included:
 - Use of the Burley Park Pupil Referral Unit for a school.
 - Utilise the site of the former West Park Centre for primary provision.
 - Consider the Becketts Park site for primary provision
 - Expand Beecroft Primary School to 2 forms of entry (60 places in reception)
 - Expand Kirkstall St. Stephen's C o f E Primary School.
- 2.4 Following the event, an online forum was established using WordPress, seeking views from any interested parties on all of these suggestions. A total of 11 responses were received supporting a mixture of the options put forward. Taking into account the feedback received, local demographics as well as site availability and viability, a preferred option emerged to expand Beecroft Primary School by 0.5FE (15 places in reception)
- 2.5 Consultation on the preferred option to permanently expand Beecroft Primary School took place from 18 January 2016 to 12 February 2016. 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 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 Beecroft Primary School.

2.6 A potential solution to accommodate the remaining 1FE need was identified at Hawksworth Wood Primary School. Consultation regarding this proposal took place during March 2016 and a paper has been submitted to the Executive Board stating the outcomes of that consultation.

3 Main issues

3.1 The main reasons for not considering some of the suggestions brought forward at the Stakeholder event are as follows:

- Use of the Burley Park Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for a school.
Burley Park PRU is currently fully occupied and there are no plans to relocate the service. This is not in an area of high demographic pressure.
- Utilise the site of the former West Park Centre for primary provision.
All the available data has been analysed and it has been ascertained that a school on the former West Park Centre site would not solve the shortage issues in the Kirkstall area.
- Consider the Becketts Park site for primary provision.
North Leeds Community Nursery and Leeds City College currently occupy this site and there are no plans to relocate these services. This is not in an area of high demographic pressure.
- Expand Beecroft Primary School to 2 forms of entry (60 places in reception)
There is not enough space on site to accommodate 2FE.
- Expand Kirkstall St. Stephen's C o f E Primary School.
The site could not accommodate an expansion and Highways would have serious concerns about adding any extra capacity to this site.

3.2 The expansion of Beecroft Primary School has been brought forward as it is located in an area of high demographic need and is a popular school with parents, being oversubscribed for several years. The most recent Ofsted report rated the school as 'Outstanding' in 2010.

3.3 During the consultation period there were 86 responses received in total, this included 11 submitted through Talking Point, 14 from the School Council, 6 by email and 55 on a response form. In total there were 67 responses in support of

the proposal and 19 responses opposing it. A summary of the issues raised follows and a copy of the responses received can be requested from the Sufficiency & Participation Team at educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk.

3.4 The Governing Body of Beecroft Primary School has given its full support to the proposal.

3.5 Within the 67 responses in favour of this proposal, comments were made about the need for extra places in the area to allow local children to secure a place at a local school. Several comments received referred to the additional 'bulge' cohorts the school had taken over the years, stating that some of these children who were local to Beecroft Primary may have had to travel out of the area to secure a school place had the school not taken over its published admission number. There were also many comments about the high standards at the school and it would be a good idea to expand a 'superb' school.

3.6 The concerns raised by respondents are listed as follows:

3.6.1 **Concern:** The school is not big enough to accommodate the extra children, including concerns about the size of the hall, cloakroom areas and the number of classrooms.

Response: The proposed building work would deliver three additional classrooms within the existing building footprint of the school. This would be achieved by extending the existing first storey accommodation (off the newly created library) and some internal remodelling to the ground floor. When the proposed building work is complete, the new library space would continue to function as intended. The existing cloakroom provision would be remodelled as required within the proposed building works to support adjacent classrooms. Current Building Bulletin guidelines indicate the existing hall is oversized for a 1.5FE primary school, the proposed building work would meet the guidance in this respect.

3.6.2 **Concern:** If you make the school bigger the character of school will be negatively affected.

Response: The headteacher and governing body are very keen to retain the character of the school and are confident that they would manage any changes successfully, as they have done so for the past few years when they have accommodated extra children.

Research indicates that size is not the determining factor with regard to those schools which are successful, but that the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of leadership and management are the key drivers for success. Beecroft Primary School benefits from both of these. There is no evidence to suggest that the expansion would have a negative impact upon the education of the pupils.

3.6.3 **Concern:** If expanding onto the first floor the school would have to include a lift to comply with disability requirements.

Response: The school currently has level access through to the upper floors and any works proposed to the building would not change that. Any new accommodation would meet DDA guidelines.

3.6.4 **Concern:** There is not enough play space to accommodate the extra children. Sacred Heart children would lose important playspace.

Response: An area of existing land within the boundary of Beecroft Primary School has been identified that could be developed to enable children to play on it throughout the year. Members of the Parks and Countryside Team have visited the school and have advised that there are options available for development that could be assessed further if this proposal was approved. No play space would be lost from Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School if this proposal is approved.

3.6.5 **Concern:** There is already too much traffic around the school at drop off and pick up times. Parents park inconsiderately and dangerously causing problems for local residents and damage has already been caused to vehicles and grass verges.

Response: Parking and traffic issues in and around the school would be assessed if this proposal goes ahead. Colleagues from our Built Environment and Highways Teams have already spoken to residents in the area (Eden Way, Eden Gardens, Argie Avenue and Sandford Road) and discussed possible solutions to these issues. Traffic surveys would be completed to enable Highways to establish a complete account of the highway use in the surrounding area. The school's travel plan would also be reviewed.

The head teacher at Beecroft Primary School, Miss Turner, has arranged for parents to be able to park at the Millford Sports Club on the corner of Sandford Road and Beecroft Street for drop off and pick up times and walk up Sandford Road. Road Safety Officers have monitored this Park & Stride scheme and have advised that the school have worked hard to promote the scheme. They are also open to any new initiatives to help lower congestion and are very committed to promoting Safe Active travel and have been commended by the Road Safety Team in their efforts to make this scheme a success.

Highways officers have visited the site and are considering options to improve parking in the area. Due to the circumstance that two schools occupy this site, we would consider ways to improve on site staff parking for both schools. Discussions have already taken place with the Diocese to look at possible solutions by remodelling part of the current car park to increase the number of spaces available for staff, therefore removing the need for staff to park on the streets surrounding the school.

3.6.6 **Concern:** Expanding Beecroft Primary will have a negative impact on other neighbouring schools, especially Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School.

Response: There are a total of 180 primary school places in the Kirkstall / Burley / Hawksworth planning area. The number of children due to start school in

September 2017 who live within this planning area is 224. This figure rises for subsequent years, confirming the need for an additional 1.5FE (45 places) to be established. Therefore, in addition to the proposal to expand Beecroft Primary School a consultation took place during March 2016 on a proposal to expand Hawksworth Wood Primary School from 1FE to 2FE from 2017. A report has been submitted to the Executive Board stating the outcomes of that consultation.

3.6.7 **Concern:** The school intends to pay for the building work, should this not be spent of the children.

Response: The project is intended to meet the local authority's sufficiency duty and the build costs would therefore be met by the local authority.

3.6.8 **Concern:** If the local authority decides to expand Beecroft Primary it is not without possibility that the Catholic diocese could ask for its building back.

Response: The Catholic Diocese has agreed to this expansion proposal and has recently been working closely with the local authority to alleviate some of the problems experienced with regard to power supply to both schools together with the issues around staff parking.

There has been a lease agreement in place with the Diocese for many years, and the current lease runs until 2021. If any alterations were to be made to this agreement then all parties would be involved in negotiating any changes.

3.6.9 **Concern:** Residents that live close to the school were not informed of the consultation.

Response: Letters regarding the consultation were sent to each parent/carer with a child at Beecroft Primary and to all the other schools in the area. Local residents were leafleted, but unfortunately due to an issue with our distributor, they were only delivered on 3 February. A banner advertising the consultation was attached to the school railings at the entrance by Sandford Road at the beginning of the consultation, so anyone using the path that links Kirkstall Road to Argie Avenue should have been able to see it. Unfortunately the banner was vandalised and had to be removed. The banner was subsequently replaced for the remainder of the consultation period. Everyone had the opportunity to respond to the consultation online through Leeds City Council's website. A contact number was also available for anyone with any questions that could not attend a drop in sessions at the school.

3.6.10 **Concern:** The school have already taken on extra children voluntarily, if the extra numbers are made permanent, what will stop them taking more children on a temporary basis.

Response: Beecroft Primary School has taken a temporary cohort in reception of an extra 15 children since 2013. This amounts to 45 children in total. These children are currently working their way through the school. The site constraints mean that Beecroft Primary school could not take any more than 45 per year

group. If the school becomes a 1.5FE school then the maximum number of pupils in the school would be 315. The school could not accommodate any more than 315 children in total due to the size of the site.

3.6.11 **Concern:** Previous building work has caused disruption to the onsite caretaker for Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School during the school holidays.

Response: We cannot comment on previous building work undertaken by the school as Leeds City Council was not involved with it. Any build projects we oversee would be carefully managed to ensure the health and safety of children at all times, therefore any works that are likely to be very noisy or disruptive would be carried out whilst pupils and staff are away. We would ask any contractors to be mindful of anyone on site during these times and try to keep disruption to a minimum.

3.6.12 **Concern:** You omitted to inform us that the Ofsted Grading of Outstanding Beecroft received was from 6 years ago, this means that full and transparent information was not included in the literature you shared with interested parties.

Response: The omission of the date of Beecroft's last Ofsted report was in error, however, this is the last and most recent grading, and therefore the only one we could have entered into the document. In future, we will add the date of the Ofsted grading.

3.6.13 **Concern:** All public funds must be used to their best advantage and for the children they have been allocated to. Recently there have been several instances where the apportionment of costs between the schools has been to the detriment of the pupils.

Response: We cannot comment on school's individual budgets, however the local authority's Finance Team have stated that costs are based on pupil numbers and they would continue to work with both schools in the future to manage any financial concerns.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The process in respect of this proposal has been managed in accordance with the relevant legislation and with local good practice.

4.1.2 Early consultation included a stakeholder event and on-line discussions through our WordPress site on the range of suggestions that emerged from the stakeholder event. The consultation on the preferred option included drop in sessions for parents/carers, residents and other stakeholders at Beecroft 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 and Built Environment teams supported officers from Children's Services at these sessions.
- 4.1.4 Meetings were also held with the school council, staff and governing body of Beecroft Primary School. Other local schools were engaged in the stakeholder event and in the on-line consultation. Several conversations were held with the Head Teacher at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and the Catholic Diocese due to the shared nature of the site.
- 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 support to the proposal.
- 4.1.6 The consultation document for this proposal can be found at: <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Currentschoolsconsultation.aspx> or requested from the Sufficiency and Participation Team by emailing: educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk.

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

- 4.2.1 The EDCI form for Beecroft 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 proposal is 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 council's ambition for Leeds to be the Best City, including being a Child-Friendly City and to the Best Council Plan 2016/17 outcome for everyone in Leeds to 'do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life' through the creation of good quality, local school 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. Beecroft Primary School was rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted at its most recent inspection in 2010.
- 4.3.3 Further objectives of the Best Council Plan 2015-2020 are 'supporting communities and tackling poverty' and 'building a child friendly city'. 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 fundamental to the Learning Places Programme.

4.4 Resources and value for money

It is not possible at this stage to quantify an indicative budget for the proposed expansion of Beecroft Primary School. The project has progressed through early viability stages and formal detailed design would commence if Executive Board approve the publication of the statutory notice. However, early analysis of the proposed works estimates the scheme costs would not exceed £1million based on a desk-top exercise and utilising existing asset management data held, although this is subject to further surveys, structural calculations etc. Planning applications and requests for Authority to Spend will follow at the appropriate time.

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 proposal to increase primary provision in Kirkstall / Burley / Hawksworth has 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. This proposal has been

brought forward to meet that need, and following the appropriate consultation we now seek to move them to the next stage. It 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 Beecroft Primary School have been considered, and on balance, the proposal remains strong and 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 (67 out of 86) 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

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the publication of a Statutory Notice to permanently expand Beecroft Primary School from a capacity of 210 pupils to 315 pupils with an increase in the admission number from 30 to 45 with effect from September 2017.
- 6.2 Note the responsible officer for implementation is the Head of Learning Systems.

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.