

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions. Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Children and Families	Service area: Sufficiency and Participation
Lead person: Darren Crawley	Contact number: 0113 3787227

Title: Outcome of statutory notice on a proposal to permanently increase learning places at West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College from September 2021

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

 Service / Function

 Other

If other, please specify

The proposal seeks to ensure a sufficiency of specialist learning places in the city.

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to ensure there are sufficient learning places for all children living in its area. The local authority is also required to promote choice and diversity, and therefore must also ensure that there are a range of options available to parents/carers.

The proposal is to permanently expand West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College from 350 to 500 places for children and young people aged 2-19 utilising a site on Buckingham Road in Headingley (formerly known as Rose Court) with effect from September 2021.

This screening form looks at the equality considerations that have taken place during the consultation and engagement process with stakeholders. It also seeks to identify any future action required to ensure that equality, diversity, cohesion and integration continues

to be well considered throughout the process, should the proposal continue through to the next stage.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies and policies, service and functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater or lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Also those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being.

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	X	
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	X	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		X
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment • Advancing equality of opportunity • Fostering good relations 	X	

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?**

The number of children and young people living in Leeds has increased over the past decade, which has resulted in rising demand for both mainstream and specialist provision places across the city. The need for specialist school places continues to grow with particular increases in the areas of complex learning difficulties and complex communication difficulties which are being identified as a consequence of a substantial increase in Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments. The need for places

in specialist schools (across both primary and secondary phases) is forecast to increase beyond the number of places currently available in Leeds and the proposed expansion of West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College has been brought forward (along with other proposals) to address this city-wide need.

Following a public consultation by Leeds City Council on a proposal to establish new specialist provision at the former Rose Court site on Buckingham Road in Headingley, Executive Board gave approval in February 2020 for a free school presumption process to take place to identify a sponsor to run the provision. The free school competition took place in May/June 2020 but did not result in a successful sponsor being identified. As per DfE Guidance, the next stage would be a Section 7 competition where a Local Authority can invite applications from persons other than other local authorities to establish a new special free school or new special foundation school. By October 2020 the required permission from the Secretary of State to allow a Section 7 competition to proceed had not been received. The governing body of West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College approached the Local Authority with an alternative proposal about utilising the former Rose Court buildings to expand their provision onto a further additional site. The DfE confirmed that West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College would be acceptable to them as a provider for specialist provision on the former Rose Court site. The governing body subsequently proceeded to consult on the proposal, working in partnership with Leeds City Council.

West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College was rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted at its most recent inspection and is popular with families. The school has a strong leadership team and its dedicated and skilled staff team are very positive about a potential permanent expansion. The school already delivers successfully across multiple sites. The Principal and Governing Body have prior experience of successfully managing other expansions.

Public consultation on the governing body's proposal took place between 18 November and 2 December 2020. To maximise stakeholder engagement a variety of consultation methods were used, including email communications and an online survey. Details about the consultation were sent to: parent/carers with a child currently attending West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College; staff and governors of West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College; all primary schools, secondary schools and SILCs in Leeds; ward members; local MPs; the Diocese; parent groups supporting families with a child with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability); and other relevant stakeholders. Posters were displayed at a number of locations in the Headingley and Woodhouse areas. Information was available via the school's website, the Leeds City Council website and through various social media platforms and accounts.

Online consultation sessions were also held for parents/carers, local residents and other interested parties which offered attendees an opportunity to discuss the proposal with Leeds City Council officers and representatives/governors from West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College.

Interested parties could submit their views on the proposals by completing an online survey or by emailing/writing to the Sufficiency and Participation Team. The length of consultation and the variety of methods in which people could respond to the consultation were intended to make the consultation open to all and was in line with DfE guidance.

- **Key findings**

From the equality impact screening the Sufficiency and Participation Team found that this proposal would have a positive effect on some of the 6 categories listed below;

- Age
- Sex and Gender Reassignment
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation

The additional specialist learning places would create more opportunities for more pupils to be supported in a way that meets their individual needs, regardless of age, sex, gender reassignment, religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation, in an inclusive specialist school environment. This proposal supports that aim and would not have an adverse impact on any child or young person who attends the school included in this proposal.

Areas across Leeds have experienced extremely high levels of demographic growth over the past decade with a resulting increase in demand for primary and secondary specialist provision. This proposal would ensure that additional specialist places allow for children and young people to be educated close to where they live and potentially reduces the distance they have to travel to access a suitable learning place.

The proposal would have a positive impact on promoting choice and diversity for local families who would be applying for a specialist school place, supporting the achievement of The Best Council Plan outcome that states that 'we want everyone in Leeds to do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life'. Leeds City Council's commitment to helping achieve our ambition for Leeds to be the best city to grow up in, supporting the priority aims of improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes.

All proposals which involve changing or creating new SEND provision must meet the requirements of the SEN Improvement Test. This involves demonstrating how any proposed changes would improve the range and quality of SEND provision, including access to wider support services and specialist teaching and that these are in line with the local authority's wider strategic plan for SEND provision,

The local authority has a statutory duty to ensure the sufficiency of learning places for all the children living in Leeds. In addition to our statutory duty we want to further support the authority's aspiration to be the best city to grow up in and be a Child Friendly City.

During the consultation period, 91 survey responses were received. In total, 86 respondents (95% of the total) strongly supported or somewhat supported the proposal. In comparison there were 3 who somewhat opposed or strongly opposed it (3% of the total). A further 2 respondents stated that they neither supported nor opposed the proposal (2% of the total). 78 of the 91 respondents stated that they found the consultation information useful.

Further details about the responses and issues identified by stakeholders and respondents during the consultation period are included in the main body of the Executive Board report.

- **Actions**

If the proposal progresses, the additional specialist school places would start to become available following the modifications to the school building which is expected to be completed by September 2021.

During the consultation process, due regard to equality was given to all aspects of developing and implementing the proposal. If the proposal is approved, during the design process for the school accommodation, the plans would be shared with stakeholders. Through the design process, the new site would be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. This would ensure that the building is accessible to all users; students, staff and visitors.

5. If you are **not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you **will need to carry out an impact assessment**.**

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
Date to complete your impact assessment	
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	

6. Governance, ownership and approval
Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Darren Crawley	Sufficiency and Participation Lead	7/1/2021
Date screening completed		8/1/2021

7. Publishing

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.
- A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:	
For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services	Date sent: 11/1/2021
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent: