

# Outcome of consultation to permanently increase learning places at Leeds City Academy from September 2023

Date: 27 July 2022

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## What is this report about?

### Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report contains details of a proposal to increase learning places at Leeds City Academy, brought forward by The White Rose Academies Trustees, working in partnership with Leeds City Council. The Local Authority (LA) is fully supportive of this proposal as this will help the LA to meet its duty to ensure sufficiency of school places and support the Leeds Best City Ambition to ensure young people have the skills which enable them to realise their potential and thrive. The changes that are proposed form prescribed alterations under Department for Education advice for academy trusts, Making Significant Changes to an Open Academy (November 2019).
- For maintained schools the LA would propose any increases (expansions), carry out consultations and then make the decisions on both the principle of expansion and the associated costs. However, for Academy proposals, the Trust Board are responsible for proposing and consulting on any expansions and they make the final decision on whether or not to proceed. In these cases, where the LA has identified a need for additional places, any build scheme would be funded by the LA, Executive Board would need to grant provisional approval for authority to spend (ATS) to deliver the proposed permanent expansion. This applies to this proposal.
- A consultation on a proposal to expand Leeds City Academy from a capacity of 750 to 1050 students by increasing the admission number in year 7 from 150 to 210 with effect from September 2023 took place between 7 March and 3 April 2022. The White Rose Academies Trust Board, as the decision maker, have considered the outcome of the consultation and approved the proposal to expand Leeds City Academy. This report gives details of the outcome of the consultation and requests approval for authority to spend (ATS) up to £8.9m to deliver the proposed permanent expansion at Leeds City Academy.
- A total of 27 consultation responses were received of which 59% either strongly or somewhat supported the proposal and 41% strongly or somewhat opposed the proposal.
- This report summarises the representations received during the public consultation and seeks approval from Executive Board on the recommendations below.

## Recommendations

- a) Note the outcome of consultation on the proposal to permanently expand Leeds City Academy from a capacity of 750 to 1050 students by increasing the admission number in year 7 from 150 to 210 with effect from September 2023, and note that The White Rose Academies Trust Board, as the decision maker, have considered the outcome of the consultation and approved the proposal to expand Leeds City Academy;
- b) Grant approval for authority to spend (ATS) up to £8.9m to deliver the proposed permanent expansion at Leeds City Academy, with final approval of expenditure to be confirmed by the Director of Children and Families (in consultation with the Director of Resources and Director of City Development) following receipt of further detailed design work and planning applications; and
- c) Note that The White Rose Academies Trust intends to self-deliver the build scheme and that the proposal has been brought forward in time for places to be delivered for 2023.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 There is an identified need for additional year 7 places in central Leeds to meet anticipated demand in future years.
- 2 There has been an increase in the population of children in primary schools across Leeds over recent years which resulted in a number of primary school expansions. The larger cohorts are now feeding through into secondary schools and the number of children living in central Leeds, in particular those living nearest to Leeds City Academy, has increased. Current population and admissions data indicate that additional secondary school places will be required in this area to ensure local demand is met.
- 3 Several secondary schools in central Leeds have admitted additional pupils above their Published Admission Number (PAN) in recent years, in response to demand for places. A new free school, Trinity Academy Leeds, also opened in September 2021 due to the rising demand for school places across the wider area. The need for additional places in central Leeds is expected to continue over the next few years which is why we are now looking to create further permanent places.
- 4 To help manage the growing need for secondary places in the local area, Leeds City Academy has admitted an additional 60 pupils above the PAN into year 7 for the last two years on a temporary basis and will be doing so again in September 2022.
- 5 Leeds City Academy was rated 'Good' by Ofsted at its most recent inspection and is popular with local families. The principal and trustees are confident that if the academy were to expand, existing high standards of teaching and learning could be maintained, resulting in improved outcomes for a greater number of local children.

## What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards Affected:** Headingley & Hyde Park

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 6 This proposal is being brought forward to meet the LA's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all the children and young people in Leeds. Providing places close to where children live allows improved accessibility to local and desirable school places, is an efficient use of resources and reduces the risk of non-attendance.

- 7 This proposal contributes to the city's ambition to be the best council, the best city in which to grow up and a child friendly city. The delivery of pupil places through the Learning Places Programme is one of the baseline entitlements of a child friendly city
- 8 A good quality school place also contributes towards delivery of targets within the Children and Young People's Plan such as our obsession to improve achievement, attainment and attendance at school.
- 9 The Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening (EDCI) form is attached as an appendix to this report.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

- 10 The process in respect of the proposal has been managed in accordance with the relevant legislation and with local good practice.
- 11 The trustee's consultation on the proposal took place between 7 March and 3 April 2022 to seek the views of parents, local residents and other stakeholders. To maximise stakeholder engagement a variety of consultation methods were used, including email communications and an online survey. An information session was also held at Leeds City Academy providing an opportunity for parents, carers, school staff, local residents and other interested stakeholders to discuss the proposal with the school leadership team as well as Leeds City Council representatives. Leaflets were delivered to 5,000 homes in the vicinity of Leeds City Academy. The Academy informed parents and carers of existing pupils of the consultation in writing. Details about the consultation were sent via email to primary and secondary schools in the area to share with their parents and communities. Information was also shared via email with local ward members, MP's, local neighbourhood and community associations and other stakeholders. Information was available via the Academy's website, Leeds City Council's website and through various social media platforms.
- 12 Comments were received via the online survey from parents and carers, staff and local residents.
- 13 Ward members for Headingley & Hyde Park are supportive of the proposal to expand Leeds City Academy.
- 14 A total of 27 survey responses were received during the consultation period of which 16 (59%) either strongly supported or somewhat supported the proposal to permanently expand Leeds City Academy and 11 (41%) either strongly opposed or somewhat opposed the proposal. The majority of respondents who either strongly or somewhat opposed the proposal were local residents.
- 15 A summary of views expressed by respondents who supported the proposal is below;
  - a) 7 respondents commented positively about the quality of education at Leeds City Academy and how this could be extended to more local children through the expansion. Comments made included that Leeds City Academy is a rapidly improving school and a fantastic place for students and staff, providing an excellent education and cultural experience for young people.
  - b) 4 respondents commented that providing more local places would benefit both students and the environment by reducing the need to travel by car/bus.
  - c) 4 respondents commented that an expansion could have benefits, for current and additional students, in terms of improvements to facilities (dining, teaching, sports and IT), some of which may also potentially be able to be opened for lease to the community outside of school hours.
- 16 A summary of concerns raised by respondents and responses to those concerns is below;

- a) **Concern about potential negative impact on traffic and highways:** 7 respondents expressed concern around increased traffic and congestion, inconsiderate parking on streets close to the Academy at drop off and pick up times, and issues caused by limited access to the site. Some respondents suggested that if more children were encouraged to use the buses this would improve the situation and one respondent suggested that more parking spaces are needed on site.

**Response:** The potential permanent expansion of Leeds City Academy has been proposed to address an increase in the number of Year 7 aged young people in the local area and especially those living within the catchment area. It is therefore anticipated that the majority of pupils allocated the additional places would live within a reasonable walking distance of the school. The Academy already has 210 pupils in current years 7 and 8 due to admitting additional children, at the request of the local authority, in response to increased demand for places. Therefore, the overall increase in numbers will be a further 180 pupils over the next three years.

If the proposed expansion were to progress the planning process would require a Transport Statement (TS) and Travel Plan (TP) to be developed to assess the impact of the proposed expansion on the highway network. All highways issues raised within the consultation process would be assessed as part of the TS. The TS would review the existing highway network and include collision data, speed surveys and an assessment of all existing traffic regulation orders. Appropriate improvements will be provided to meet any identified needs within the area surrounding the school, including improvements to circulation around Woodhouse Cliff and to pedestrian/cycle connections from Woodhouse Lane and Woodhouse Street. The TP would look to encourage sustainable travel modes to and from the school and the provision of improved cycle facilities and electric parking points within the development to support sustainable travel would be considered in light of the Council's commitment to carbon reduction. All identified highways measures needed to help the school expand, including increasing on-site car parking facilities for staff and potential drop off facilities at Cinder Moor, would be considered as part of the proposal.

- b) **Concern that the school buildings are physically too small to cater for more students:** 4 respondents expressed concern that areas of the school including corridors and classrooms are too small, and there is not enough dining space or toilets to allow for more students.

**Response:** If the proposal is approved then building work would be required to provide additional facilities. The additional space provided would be in line with the recommendations, set out in the 'Building Bulletin 103: Area Guidelines for Mainstream Schools' (BB103). This document sets out the Department for Education's area guidelines for school buildings and sites. It covers all state schools, including mainstream academies and free schools.

- c) **Concern about the proposed number of students:** 5 respondents expressed concern that the proposed increase in students would lead to larger classes which would put pressure on staff and leave less time/attention for individual students. Some respondents commented that keeping classes smaller is better for students, especially those with additional needs such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or English as an Additional Language. 3 respondents also expressed concern that the increase in numbers of pupils would increase the workload for staff at the academy.

**Response:** The Principal and White Rose Academies Trust are committed to maintaining the current high standards and are confident that the proposed expansion would not have a negative impact on pupils or staff. There are no plans to increase class sizes as a result of the proposed expansion. Were the school to expand, additional teaching and support staff would be required over the period that it would take for all year groups to increase in size. Schools are funded based on the number of pupils they have on roll. The increase in the number of pupils would attract an increase in funding for the school which would allow the school to enhance their curriculum offer and enable them to employ more staff to better support students individual learning needs and increase the effectiveness of teaching.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 17 The estimated capital expenditure cost range associated with the permanent expansion of Leeds City Academy is £7.4m to £8.9m inclusive of 5% LCC held contingency and a 24% optimism bias (OB) as recommended in the Treasury Green Book (24% is the lower end of Green Book OB for 'standard' buildings). The use of optimum bias is in line with City Development and the construction industry's approach to cost management at early project stages where risk pricing is not practical due to lack of survey/design information, particularly given ongoing inflationary pressures.
- 18 The proposed works are anticipated to include the construction of new accommodation to provide additional classrooms, science labs, intervention space, pupils and staff toilets, and expansion of the existing dining hall as well as external work to provide a 7 a side 4G pitch and additional parking and cycle provision. The proposed expansion would be funded from the Learning Places Programme, primarily through Basic Need capital grant allocations.
- 19 Once the viability/feasibility stage of the construction project was complete and the scheme proceeded to the detailed design phase, budgets would be aligned to reflect that all parties have agreed the final design and cost estimate, which would take account of site investigations and survey information, in accordance with standard project and risk management principles. Once design freeze was reached, the precise funding packages would be detailed in the relevant Design and Cost Reports (DCRs) and the Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Director of Resources and Director of City Development, would be asked to approve final Authority to Spend for the proposed scheme along with any necessary risk fund application, in line with the governance arrangements currently in place.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 20 This report contains details of a proposal brought forward by The White Rose Academies Trustees, working in partnership with Leeds City Council, to meet the Local Authority's duty to ensure sufficiency of school places. The changes that are proposed form prescribed alterations under Department for Education advice for academy trusts, Making Significant Changes to an Open Academy (November 2019). The statutory process for making the proposed changes varies according to the nature of the change and status of the school. The process followed in respect of this proposal is detailed in this report. The Trust Board is the decision maker in this case. However, as any build scheme would be funded by the Local Authority, Executive Board would need to grant provisional approval for authority to spend (ATS) to deliver the proposed permanent expansion at Leeds City Academy.
- 21 At its meeting in September 2021 Executive Board members agreed that in the future, and in response to the recommendation of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board, anonymised

consultation responses be shared in full with Executive Board Members as 'background documents'. These would be published alongside the agenda papers, but not form part of the formal agenda. Executive Board members are asked to consider the summary of responses in this report as part of their decision making, with the full consultation responses being available for reference by Members if needed.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 22 This proposal has been brought forward in time to allow secondary places to be delivered for 2023. A decision not to proceed at this stage may result in fresh consultations on new proposals, and places may not be delivered in time. It may also result in further temporary cohorts being delivered in other local schools which would be more costly in the longer term.
- 23 In response to growing demand for Year 7 places, Leeds City Academy has admitted additional pupils above the PAN for the last two academic years. As the number of secondary-aged students living in the area remains high in future years, additional permanent places are required to address the growing need. A decision not to proceed with the proposed expansion of Leeds City Academy could result in insufficient school places being available to meet local demand and the Local Authority's ability to meet its statutory duty for sufficiency of school places in the short term may be at risk.
- 24 There is also a corporate risk associated with failing to provide sufficient school/learning places in good quality buildings that meet the needs of local communities.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 25 This proposal offers good value for money through its capacity to support achievement of the Best City Ambitions of 'ensuring children in all areas of the city have the best start in life and enjoy a healthy, happy and friendly childhood' and 'ensuring young people and those changing career in later life have the skills and job opportunities which enable them to realise their potential and thrive'.
- 26 Providing additional school places in an already established, Ofsted rated 'Good', school in an area where demand for places is increasing will contribute towards the achievement of the Child Friendly City aim of 'improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes.' In turn, by helping young people into adulthood, to develop life skills, this proposal provides underlying support for the council's ambition to have an economy that works for everyone, creating opportunities for all.
- 27 There is an identified need for additional secondary school places in central Leeds due to increases in the number of children living there. This proposal would help meet the current and future demand and help ensure that local families are able to access local places and thereby reduce journey times to and from school.
- 28 If the proposal is approved Leeds City Academy would need to produce an updated 'Travel Plan' which would contain a package of agreed measures to mitigate the potential impact on the highway as a result of the expansion. Leeds City Council's 'TravelWise team' could support the school to identify measures to be incorporated into the travel plan that ensure safe routes to and from school and promote sustainable methods of transport including walking and cycling.
- 29 Existing planning policies seek to address the issue of climate change by ensuring that development proposals incorporate measures to reduce the impact on non-renewable resources. Any build scheme would explore the potential use of renewable energy and energy saving technologies, with the aim of increasing sustainability and minimising energy

consumption. The improved energy efficiency would also reduce the school's overall running costs, as the building would be more economical to run long-term, eventually paying for the measures put in place.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

- 30 A new free school, Leeds Trinity Academy, was opened to the East of the city centre in September 2021 in response to rising demand for places across the wider area. In addition to this some schools in central Leeds have admitted pupils above their PAN in recent years and further schools to the north of Leeds City Academy have already permanently increased their admission limit, including Carr Manor, Allerton Grange and Allerton High.
- 31 Some of the most significant increases in pupil numbers is around Leeds City Academy. If additional places are not created in this area it could result in more children having to travel out of the area to attend secondary school.
- 32 The need for additional places in central Leeds is expected to continue over the next few years which is why we are now looking to create further permanent places at Leeds City Academy.

### **How will success be measured?**

- 33 If the proposal is approved the places would be delivered for September 2023 and this would support more local families to access a local secondary school place.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 34 This proposal has been brought forward in time to allow additional secondary places to be delivered for September 2023.

## **Appendices**

- 35 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening (EDCI) form.

## **Background papers**

- 36 Anonymised consultation responses.