

Annex 4

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT:

GIRLS ONLY PROVISION

Introduction

This booklet contains information about a proposal for Leeds City Council to stop providing government-funded, girls-only secondary education in Leeds. We are holding a public consultation between Thursday 7 January and Friday 5 March 2010 to find out what you think about this proposal. This public consultation will help Leeds City Council's Executive Board make a decision about the proposal.

This proposal is only about government-funded, girls-only secondary education. It does not affect any private girls-only education in Leeds as this is not provided by Leeds City Council.

Please read this booklet. You can also attend the public meeting. Details of how you can tell us your views are at the end of this booklet.

Why are we holding this consultation?

We believe in the importance of local schools for local children wherever possible. We know that education is the key to improving life chances for children and young people in Leeds. This means we need good, inclusive and improving schools. We have to make sure that every school is strongly supported and valued by parents, carers and its local community. At the moment, girls-only education is not strongly supported in Leeds, so we need to ask the people of Leeds if we should continue to provide it.

What is the proposal?

The proposal is for Leeds City Council to stop providing government-funded, girls-only secondary education in Leeds.

What is the current girls-only education provision in Leeds?

There is currently one government-funded, girls-only secondary school in Leeds, this is Parklands Girls' High School. Every year, fewer parents and carers in Leeds choose girls-only education for their daughter. There are 140 Year 7 places at the school, but 74 girls in Year 7. Of the parents and carers of girls starting Year 7 in 2009, 63 selected Parklands Girls' High School as their first preference, six placed it second and five placed it third. This means the school only fills 45 per cent of its places through first preferences, down from 48.6 per cent in 2008 and 64.2 per cent in 2007.

Because of the way schools are funded, this puts pressure on the school's budget. The school doesn't have enough money for staff or resources, making it very difficult to keep improving standards in the classroom. This will mean that girls at the school will not receive the same opportunity to achieve their potential as their peers who are attending other schools in the city.

Unless there is a large and immediate increase in the number of parents and carers choosing girls-only education for their daughter, this problem will only get worse.

The majority of girls who attend the school do so because it is their local neighbourhood school. Few girls travel across the city specifically to attend a single-sex girls' school. This suggests that there is limited demand across the city for girls-only education.

What are the advantages of this proposal?

This proposal will help Leeds City Council with its ambition to make sure that:

- all girls in the city will receive the same opportunities to succeed as their peers.
- we use education resources more effectively for the benefit of all children.
- all schools in Leeds will be popular and successful.
- all schools will be providing high quality education and learning environments.
- all schools will provide a safe and secure learning environment that will include children and young people of different cultures, ethnicity and genders.

What will happen if this proposal is accepted?

If the proposal to stop providing girls-only education is accepted, we will establish co-educational provision, that is a school or academy for girls *and* boys, to replace Parklands Girls' High School, and we will cease to provide a girls-only secondary school in Leeds.

How to comment on these proposals

This consultation runs from Thursday 7 January 2010 to Friday 5 March 2010. If you want the Leeds City Council's Executive Board to consider your views, we must receive your comments no later than 4pm on Friday 5 March 2010.

We are holding a series of public meeting in various locations across Leeds in order to capture responses to this proposal. These will be held at:

North west at Ralph Thoresby High School on Monday 11 January 2010 at 7pm;
East at Parklands Girls' School on Monday 18 January 2010 at 7pm;
West at Pudsey Civic Centre on Wednesday 20 January at 7pm;
South at the South Leeds Academy on Wednesday 27 January at 7pm;
City centre at the Civic Hall on Wednesday 27 January at 12noon and 7pm;
North east (outer) at Wetherby High School on Monday 1 February 2010 at 7pm;
Morley at Bruntcliffe High school on Thursday 4 February 2010 at 7pm;
North west at Lawnswood School on Monday 8 February 2010 at 7pm; and
North east at Allerton High on Tuesday 9 February 2010 at 7pm.

Responses need to be in writing, or verbally at the meeting. We minute all public meetings and place the minutes on the Education Leeds website:

www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation

It is important that, if you can, you give reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the proposals so that as much information as possible is available to the Executive Board when making their decision.

Written responses can be made:

- Using the form in this booklet, which includes details of where to send it.

- By letter, to school organisation team, 9th Floor West, Merrion House, Merrion Way, Leeds, LS2 8DT.
- By email: educ.school.organisation@educationleeds.co.uk

Responses can be anonymous, but if you require an acknowledgement please include your name and address.

In addition further copies of this booklet and the response form are available on the Education Leeds website at: www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation

It has also been widely distributed to many interested people and groups, including local councillors, MPs, the Catholic and Church of England dioceses, and trades unions.

What happens to your comments?

All your views will be summarised and presented to Leeds City Council's Executive Board, which will decide whether to proceed with the proposal or to change it in any way. We expect the Board to make this decision at their meeting on Wednesday 7 April 2010.

Your comments are treated equally, whether you put them in writing or say them at the public meetings.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Please read the consultation booklet on the proposals and tell us what your views are. The questions on this form are provided to help you do so, but you do not have to respond to all of them. If you prefer not to use this form, you can also put your views in a letter. Letters and forms should be sent to the address at the bottom of this form. Extra copies of this booklet and response form are available at www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation. You may also respond by e-mail to educ.school.organisation@educationleeds.co.uk

Responses must be received by 4pm on Friday 5th March 2010. All responses will be reported to a meeting of the Executive Board of Leeds City Council in April 2010.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PROPOSALS

1. What are your views on the proposal to stop providing girls-only secondary education in Leeds?

3. Have you found this booklet useful?

4. Have you found the consultation process useful?

5. Do you have any other comments or views?

Your personal details (if you would like your response can be formally acknowledged):

Name:

Address:

e-mail address:

Parent/Carer of present pupil(s)
Parent/Carer of primary school child
Other adult relative
Pupil
Governor

Member of staff
Local Resident
Elected Member
Community Representative
Other

Data Protection Act 1998

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 we must inform you of the following. Education Leeds and Leeds City Council are seeking your views to help inform the decision on this proposal. Your personal information will be used only for this purpose, and may be shared with other agencies who are involved in the consultation, however only to address any issues you raise. If you do not wish to provide personal details your views will still be considered, but we will not be able to acknowledge your response personally.

Please send your reply to:

The Chief Executive, Education Leeds, FAO School Organisation Team
9th Floor West, Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8DT