
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 21 July 2010

SUBJECT: Outcome of statutory notices on the proposal to close City of Leeds School in September 2011.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 In April 2010 the Executive Board approved the publication of statutory notices on a proposal to close City of Leeds High School in 2011. The Board also asked that concurrent with this an options appraisal be developed with key stakeholders that considered the future educational use of the City of Leeds Site.
- 1.2 This report details the representations received in response to those notices and the options considered with key stakeholders. The project team of stakeholders were unanimous in their recommendations.
- 1.3 The report recommends retaining an 11-16 school on the site, and the establishment of new governance arrangements by September 2011 at the latest, with a refreshed vision which fuses the contribution of key partners and which is focused on maximising the progression of learners.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As part of the local authorities response to the National Challenge, Executive Board on the 7th April 2010, approved the publication of a statutory notice to close City of Leeds High School on 31st August 2011 and requested a full report on the future use of the site for educational purposes, to be submitted at the same Executive Board meeting.
- 2.2 This report presents a full analysis of the options available for using the site and makes a recommendation to Executive Board that seeks to:
 - improve the outcomes achieved by young people in Leeds and improve their progression into further and higher education and employment
 - be attractive to young people and their parents
 - help build cohesion in the community
 - build on what works
 - build on the strengths of current provision

- optimise the strengths that the site represents
- be viable in resource terms
- be supported by key partners

RECOMMENDATIONS

5 Executive Board are recommended to:

- a) Not to proceed with the closure of City of Leeds School
- b) Retain an 11-16 school on the site
- c) Establish new governance arrangements by September 2011 at the latest, with a refreshed vision which fuses the contribution of key partners and which is focused on maximising the progression of learners.

Agenda Item:

Originator: Dirk Gilleard

Telephone: 0113 395 0235

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 21 July 2010

SUBJECT: Outcome of statutory notices on the proposal to close City of Leeds School in September 2011.

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Eligible for Call-in

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Not Eligible for Call-in
(Details contained in the Report)

1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 In April 2010 the Executive Board approved the publication of statutory notices on a proposal to close City of Leeds High School in 2011. The Board also asked that concurrent with this an options appraisal be developed with key stakeholders that considered the future educational use of the City of Leeds Site.
- 1.2 This report details the representations received in response to those notices and the options considered with key stakeholders. It recommends retaining an 11-16 school on the site, and the establishment of new governance arrangements by September 2011 at the latest, with a refreshed vision which fuses the contribution of key partners and which is focused on maximising the progression of learners.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the Local Authority has until 28 July 2010 to make a final decision on the closure proposal, being two months from the date of expiry of the statutory notice.
- 2.2 In 2008, the Government launched the National Challenge. This means that the minimum standard expected of every secondary school is that 30% of their young

people achieve five good GCSEs including English and Maths by 2011. The Council received an Improvement Notice from the DCSF, now the Department for Education (DfE), following meetings with the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and his ministers. In these meetings the Authority was urged to take radical action, including structural change, in each of the National Challenge schools. The Improvement Notice states that we must demonstrate clear evidence of improvement in outcomes evidenced by a reduction in the number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths. Education Leeds working with DfE and National Strategies colleagues have produced, as required by the DfE, a National Challenge Plan to secure the necessary improvements. This plan, which includes the necessary structural changes, is being monitored by a strategic board and the independent Children's Services Improvement Board

- 2.3 The school is in an Education Leeds extended partnership and is a National Challenge school. On key performance indicators the school was well below national averages and below the floor targets in 2009. This year the school has readily accepted and benefited from external support from a Leeds consultant head teacher and a National Leader of Education, in addition to support from the school improvement adviser. The strategies implemented are underpinning improvements in teaching and learning and though the 5A*-C figure this summer will still be below floor targets, it is expected to be double that of 2009. Intervention strategies targeted at specific cohorts of underperforming students have had an impact this year and value added for these groups is expected to show significant improvement. Although attendance has fallen short of the target, it is improving year on year and the persistent absence target has been met. The atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful, students have a positive attitude to learning, the building is well cared for and behaviour is good, as evidenced and noted by visitors to the school, and confirmed by Ofsted inspectors twice in the last 18 months. Following a satisfactory Ofsted in 2009, inspectors returned just over a year later to conduct a monitoring visit and judged the school to be making satisfactory progress against the original key issues.
- 2.4 The public consultation period ran from 7th January to 5th March 2010. At their meeting on 7th April 2010 the Executive Board received a report summarising the consultation during which the following issues emerged:
- a) National Challenge floor targets are a poor tool to assess the quality of provision on offer at the school – **issue of quality**
 - b) The importance of the school at the heart of the community and the potential impact on the community of closure – **community resource**
 - c) The potential loss of expertise that has been developed in supporting children new to the country and/or with English as an Additional Language (EAL) – **Loss of expertise**
 - d) lack of detailed information on the transition routes for pupils and staff and concerns with the possible receiver schools/academies – **transition arrangements**
 - e) support for the school to remain under the current leadership, with support to maintain progress, including the emergence of alternatives – **alternative proposals**.
- 2.5 At that meeting the Executive Board approved the publication of a statutory notice to close City of Leeds High School on 31st August 2011 and requested a full report on the future use of the site for educational purposes, to be submitted at the same Executive Board meeting.

- 2.6 There were 175 responses to the statutory notice of which 93 were from pupils, 44 from staff, 18 from community representatives and 9 from parents. There was a submission from the governing body (attached at appendix 4) with others from elected representatives, LMU and a Union. Copies of all of the statutory representations can be found at www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation
- 2.7 The Executive Board is the decision maker for these proposals. It has set up the School Organisation Advisory Board (SOAB) to consider school organisation proposals when objections are received. Statutory guidance requires the decision maker to consider four key issues:
- Is there any information missing?
 - Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements?
 - Has the public consultation been carried out prior to the publication of the statutory notice?
 - Are the proposals 'related' to other published proposals and should therefore be considered together?
- 2.8 The SOAB met on 1st July 2010 and minutes of that meeting are in Appendix 1. SOAB were provided with an overview of the options. Copies of the statutory notices are in Appendix 2.
- 2.9 The decision on the proposals is the responsibility of the Local Authority. The Authority must have regard to the Guidance issued by the DfE. A full copy of the Guidance has been given to members of Executive Board. The Executive Board may:-
- Approve the proposals
 - Reject the proposals
 - Approve the proposals with a modification (e.g school closure implementation date) but not so as to in effect substitute new proposals.
 - Approve the proposals subject to them meeting limited specific conditions as set out in the statutory regulations by a specified date
- The Executive Board must give reasons for the decision irrespective of whether the proposals are rejected or approved indicating the main factors/criteria for the decision. If the Executive Board does not make a decision on the proposals within 2 months of the end of the statutory notice that is by 28 July 2010 the Authority must within one week refer the proposals to the Schools Adjudicator for a decision. The Schools Adjudicator has no time limit within which to decide the proposals but has indicated a general target of 6 weeks.
- 3.0 **MAIN ISSUES**
- 3.1 **Options appraisal on future educational use of the City of Leeds site**
- 3.1.1 A project team of relevant partners was established which included representatives of:
- The Governing Body of City of Leeds High School
 - The Headteacher of City of Leeds High School
 - Another local high school
 - A local primary school
 - The Leeds City College
 - The Leeds College of Building
 - The Director of Children's Services Unit
 - Education Leeds

- 3.1.2 For inspiration, the project team used the original Executive Board proposals and the alternative proposals submitted during the formal consultation period. Early on the team agreed the drivers for any proposals
- 3.1.3 The project team felt that any proposal for the future use of the site should:
- improve the outcomes achieved by young people in Leeds and improve their progression into further and higher education and employment
 - be attractive to young people and their parents
 - help build cohesion in the community
 - build on what works
 - build on the strengths of current provision
 - optimise the strengths that the site represents
 - be viable in resource terms
 - be supported by key partners
- 3.1.4 The project team identified two broad sets of options:
- A. Retain a school on the site
 - B. Establish a specialist facility
- A. RETAIN A SCHOOL ON THE SITE**
- 3.1.5 In terms of retaining a school, four options were considered:
- 11-18 school
 - 11-16 school
 - 14-19 school (a studio school)
 - Through school, 0-16
- 3.1.6 The project team's initial exploration of these options generated the following conclusions:
- The school has a small and very costly 6th form which acts as a significant drain on its viability. This year, funding is being provided for 51 students. Currently provision being delivered to the young people in the sixth form is costing £8,198 per student. The national rate would be £4,051. All sixth forms will converge to the national rate and this will make the sixth form prohibitively expensive. This favours options to 16.
 - The lack of key stage 3 in a studio school (14-19) raised serious concerns about the challenge of progression from key stage 3 in other high schools.
 - The through school option promises seamless transition and could support a highly nurturing environment
- 3.1.7 The major concern of the project team, in considering these options, was attracting sufficient parents to establish a viable, cost-effective school. The consultation demonstrated that the current school is highly valued by the young people who attend and their parents, but the project team also agreed that any school on the site would need an 'accelerated refresh' and would need to secure a broader confidence in the future stability, quality and effectiveness of its provision. These were important factors in the team's discussion of governance models. Three options were considered:

- Establish a conventional LA maintained school governing body on the dissolution of the federation governing body
- Establish a trust school engaging key partners who are committed to the school
- Establish an academy

3.1.8 As the national coalition government's policy is still emerging, there is some uncertainty about the governance models available to consider. However, it was felt that whatever proposals were adopted, they should signal a commitment to a fresh approach and one which would attract and inspire a wider clientele. The governance option adopted should build on and fuse the commitment of partners to refresh the vision for the school and to help drive a culture of continued improvement.

3.1.9 For these reasons, the project team chose to concentrate on the 11-16 and through-school options with a refreshed governance that benefits from the support of strong partners.

B. ESTABLISH A SPECIALIST FACILITY

3.1.10 A variety of specialist educational 'functions' have emerged during development of the national challenge response and during the consultation process:

- 14-19 hub
- 14-16 hub
- sixth form centre

3.1.11 The notions of a 14-19 or a 14-16 hub were similar. In both cases the hub would be utilised by schools and colleges to deliver vocational options in a more coherent way than present. The facility would bring together, school, college and business partners to develop innovative delivery models. Young people would remain on the role of their 'home' school or college. Although an appropriate business model could be created, the biggest constraint would be start-up capital. There was also concern that the 14-19 hub would unnecessarily duplicate the 16-19 vocational provision currently offered by the colleges.

3.1.12 A sixth form centre could be established in a similar way but, the emphasis would be on level 3 options 16-19. If the facility offered those level 3 qualifications that reflected the strengths of the site, and was an integral part of the local 14-19 partnership's offer, start-up costs would be lower but still significant. Again, there were concerns that this would duplicate accessible level 3 programmes available in the colleges.

3.1.13 For these reasons, the project team chose to concentrate on the 14-16 hub option.

3.1.14 A closer analysis of the options is detailed in Appendix 3

3.2 Responses to the statutory consultation

3.2.1 There were 175 responses to the statutory notice. A breakdown of these is available in Appendix 4. There was a detailed submission from the governing body (attached at Appendix 5) which addressed alternative options for the future of the school. Copies of all of the statutory representations can be found at www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation

3.2.2 The issues raised by objectors were substantially the same as those raised during the earlier consultation. However, nearly a third of respondents identified the satisfactory outcome of the recent Ofsted monitoring visit and the apparent contradiction of this judgement with a proposed closure. Other issues identified include the quality of provision currently available (with the National Challenge floor targets viewed as a poor tool to assess this), the importance of the school within the community and the potential impact on the community of closure, the lack of detailed information on transition routes for pupils including concerns over possible receiver schools/academies and the disruption to pupils and travel. The responses also indicated support for alternative proposals involving Trust arrangements and the formal engagement of partners which retain provision on the site.

3.2.3 Detailed responses to the issues raised by objectors are detailed in Appendix 6.

3.3 **Conclusions**

3.3.1 The project team concluded that the most viable option at the present time, and one which most effectively fits the ambitions in paragraph 3.1.3, is an 11-16 school.

3.3.2 The 14-16 hub option would add value to the city's provision but would be prohibitively expensive at the current time and, more importantly, does not sufficiently address significant concerns that emerged during the consultation about the role and strength of the current school in achieving community cohesion. However, the project team felt that the proposal to retain an 11-16 school on the site would also provide an opportunity to develop the partnership with local schools and the colleges in strengthening and broadening the vocational options 14-16.

3.3.3 The through-school option has many benefits. However, the project team concluded that this option involves a level of complexity and innovation that could distract the school from its immediate priority of continuing to improve outcomes at 16. The school has committed itself to this ambition and needs time for this focus to impact. Once the school is more secure in its trajectory and viability, there will be opportunities to strengthen the through-school notion. This might include utilising part of the site for primary education and helping the city address its need to provide more primary places in the centre of the city.

3.3.4 An 11-16 school could be confirmed on the site immediately following the dissolution of the federation. The local authority would need to establish a new governance structure at this point and it is recommended that this should fuse the commitment of existing partners with a strong focus on the progression and transition of learners. This new governing body would need to be established as soon as possible to appoint a permanent headteacher (the current head is an acting headteacher). The governing body should secure the partnership of:

- Feeder primary schools
- Leeds City College
- The College of Building
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- NotreDame

3.3.5 The alternative proposals submitted by the existing governing body and that submitted by the OpenXS partnership was rooted in the concept of a 21st Century School operating as a community based facility. It would see Key Stage 3 provision developed to reflect the learning style of primary settings and so ease the

discontinuity of transition while concentrating on the community nature of the provision. This vision was confirmed by the project team and there was a strong consensus that 'the transformation proposed requires, a new direction, a new curriculum, a new commitment – a new start'.

3.3.6 Our analysis suggests that the local authority should aim to achieve a four form entry school in September 2011 rising to eight form entry in 2015.

3.3.7 This option addresses successfully the majority of the objections received through the statutory consultation process.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

4.1 Proposals identified in this report would impact on the "Narrowing the Gap" and "Going up a League" agendas. This proposal addresses the requirements of the Council to respond to the National Challenge in respect of this school by building a strong professional governance comprising key committed partners who can secure strong leadership and drive forward improvements.

5.0 **LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Legal Implications**

5.1.1 The Local Authority is the decision-maker on the proposal to close City of Leeds High School. Since representations have been received during the statutory notice period the proposal has been referred to the School Organisation Advisory Board (SOAB) to consider and to make a recommendation to the Executive Board (appendix 2). A final decision must be made by the Executive Board within 2 months of the expiry of the statutory notices.

5.1.2 The School Governance (Federations) Regulations 2007 , Paragraph 38 (2) states 'Where one of only two federated schools is to leave a federation, the federation is dissolved in accordance with Part 8'. In this part, the Governing Body must give notice of the fact and the proposed date of dissolution to the relevant authority (Leeds City Council). At this stage the council must:

- establish a new temporary governing body in accordance with Parts 3 and 4 of the New Schools Regulations; and
- issue a new instrument of government in accordance with Part 5 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended.

5.1.3 On the dissolution of the federation governing body, it would be the responsibility of the local authority to establish a temporary governing body and issue a new instrument of government for the school. On the date of dissolution, the temporary governing body established for the school would be incorporated as the governing body of the school under the new name given in the school's instrument of government.

5.1.4 In order to secure sustainable governance arrangements with key partners, work would be undertaken to develop a school trust which would include the key partner primary schools, with the aim of establishing the trust to work alongside the governing body to develop and sustain a new vision for the school.

5.2 **Resource Implications**

- 5.2.1 Based on the latest school staffing budgets there is an anticipated budget deficit of £648,555 in September 2011. The school has committed to take steps to ensure that the final deficit is reduced to zero within three years. The chair of governors and the acting headteacher were eager to ensure that any structural change did not place additional burdens on the wider community of schools. The post 16 budget received by the school will be reduced over the next two years as they will have to fund at the national rate. The school would not be able to sustain its sixth form and reduce the budget deficit.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Executive Board are recommended to:

- a) Not to proceed with the closure of City of Leeds School
- b) Retain an 11-16 school on the site
- c) Establish new governance arrangements by September 2011 at the latest, with a refreshed vision which fuses the contribution of key partners and which is focused on maximising the progression of learners.

Background Papers

Executive Board, 5 December 2008 – Building School for the Future: Expression of interest for follow-on projects

Executive Board January 2009 – The National Challenge and structural change to secondary provision in Leeds Progress Report

Executive Board March 2009 – The National Challenge and Structural Change to Secondary Provision in Leeds

Executive Board October 2009 - The National Challenge and Structural Change to Secondary Provision in Leeds

Executive Board January 2010 - The future of Primrose, City of Leeds, Parklands Girls' High Schools, and of girls only secondary education in Leeds

Executive Board April 2010 - Outcome of consultation on the future of City of Leeds High School

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

THURSDAY, 1ST JULY, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor in the Chair
Mr I Garforth in the Chair
Mr C Sedgewick and Mrs T Hagerty

7 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone in attendance

8 Election of Vice Chair

The Clerk to the Board sought nominations for the position of Vice Chair to the School Organisation Advisory Board

Reverend C Sedgewick nominated Mrs T Hagerty, the Chair seconded the proposal

RESOLVED – That Mrs T Hagerty be elected Vice Chair of the School Organisation Advisory Board for a one year period

9 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received for Mr D Kenny and Mr J Sutton

10 Declarations of Interest

Mr C Sedgewick declared a personnel interest in the proposals to close Parklands Girls High School, the Diocese of the Church of England having put forward a bid to establish an Academy on the Parklands site

11 Outcome of Statutory Notices for Changes to School Organisation

The Board considered a report by the Legal Adviser to the Board explaining the role of the Board in considering objections to the following proposals and to make recommendations to the Executive Board in reaching a decision in relation to the following proposals:

Statutory proposals to seek the closure of City of Leeds High School, the Closure of Parklands Girls High School, the Closure of Primrose High School and Changes to Primary Provision in Horsforth

Changes Provision in Horsforth

The Board were advised that in January 2010 the Executive Board approved a formal consultation on proposals for changes to Featherbank Infant School and Newlathes Junior School in Horsforth. Statutory Notices were published to decrease the lower age range of

Newlaites Junior School from 7-11 to 4-11, with an admission limit of 60 and with an overall capacity of 420 children and increase the age range of Featherbank Infant School from 4-7 to 4-11 and decrease the admissions number from 60 to 30, with an overall capacity of 210 children. These proposals were formally linked.

There was one response to the statutory notices, which opposed the change.

Officers reported that the objections received raised no new significant issues

Members discussed the proposal, concentrating on the following issues:

- Use of site availability
- Concern over transition arrangements
- Risk of negative disruption to education
- A desire for further consultation on the Early years Service in the Horsforth area
- Concern over funding of a new key stage

The Board noted the objections and expressed sympathy to the concerns raised

Closure of Primrose High School

The Board were advised that in October 2009 the Executive Board approved a formal consultation on the proposed closure of Primrose High School on 31st August 2011 to be replaced by an Academy sponsored by the Co-operative Society.

There were nine responses to the statutory notice, which opposed the change.

Officers reported that the objections received raised no new significant issues

Members discussed the proposal, concentrating on the following issues:

- The ability of the sponsor(s) to deliver Secondary Education provision at Primrose
- Insufficient clarity about the links with City of Leeds College
- Early years provision

The Board noted the objections

Closure of Parklands Girls High School

The Board were advised that in October 2009 the Executive Board approved a formal consultation on the proposed closure of Parklands Girls High School on 31st August 2011 to be replaced by an Academy sponsored by the Edutrust Academies Charitable Trust (EACT). A parallel consultation was conducted on the provision of single sex girl's education.

There were seven responses to the statutory notice, which opposed the change.

Officers reported that the objections received raised no new significant issues

Members discussed the proposal, concentrating on the following issues:

- Budgetary implications for the Academy
- The ability of the proposed sponsor to deliver school improvement
- Concern about administration costs for the Academy
- The move away from single sex schools
- The location for the provision of an additional High School to serve the east Leeds community

The Board noted the objections and expressed sympathy to the concerns raised

Closure of City of Leeds High School

The Board were advised that in October 2009 the Executive Board approved a formal consultation on the proposed closure of City of Leeds High School on 31st August 2011.

There were one hundred and seventy five responses to the statutory notice, which opposed the change.

Members discussed the proposal, concentrating on the following issues:

- The viability of the school
- The location of the school was in an area compounded by challenges
- The desirability of maintaining secondary school provision in the City Centre
- A desire for availability of high quality secondary provision for that community
- Acknowledged the commitment of the staff
- To further look at the demographics of the area

The Board noted the objections and expressed sympathy to the concerns raised

Additional comments - Overall Members considered that that proposals lacked a cohesive approach to the needs of the inter-related communities involved and had now been overtaken by the new opportunities for school improvement, in conjunction with the local authority, provided by the change in central government.

In particular, Members were concerned that the location of Parklands Academy was not on the correct site for a new, large school to serve the communities of inner East Leeds.

The Board therefore recommended that an urgent review of all the three secondary proposals should take place with a view to establishing integrated, viable, high quality educational provision for the communities involved at the centre of those communities, as is inherent in the Leeds Schools Admissions Policy

RESOLVED – It was the view of the School Organisation Advisory Board that the Executive Board be recommended to:

- (i) Support the proposed changes to Primary provision in the Horsforth area
- (ii) Support the proposals to close Primrose High School and replace with an Academy
- (iii) Support the proposal to close Parklands Girls High School and replace with an Academy

- (iv) Support the proposal to close City of Leeds High School

12 Future Business

There were no issues raised under future business

13 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Arrangements for a future meeting of the Schools Organisation Advisory Board to be notified to Members in due course

Copy of the statutory notice for all proposals

Note: This is the published notice. Full detail can be obtained from www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation as indicated in these extracts.

PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE CITY OF LEEDS HIGH SCHOOL

Notice is given in accordance with section 15 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Leeds City Council, c/o The Chief Executive, Education Leeds, Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8DT intends to discontinue City of Leeds High School, Bedford Field, Woodhouse Cliff, LEEDS LS6 2LG on 31 August 2011.

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposal to discontinue have been complied with.

Pupils will transfer to other schools or academies as far as possible in accordance with the wishes of parents and for which additional school places may need to be created.

The Education Leeds Policy for the Provision of Home to School or College Transport for Children and Students prior to their nineteenth birthday current at the time of transfer will apply as appropriate to pupils attending new schools or academies.

Making Representations

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation, or by post from Education Leeds, School Organisation Team, 9th floor west, Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds, LS2 8DT, or telephone 0113 2243867.

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal to discontinue, ie by 4pm Friday 28th May 2010, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to The Chief Executive, Education Leeds, FAO School Organisation Team, 9th floor west, Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds, LS2 8DT.

Signed:



Eleanor Brazil

Interim Director of Children's Services

Leeds City Council

Publication Date: Friday 16th April 2010

Explanatory Notes

Should the proposal proceed arrangements will be made in good time for pupils to transfer to their new school or academy at the start of the academic year in September 2011.

APPENDIX 3

A closer analysis of the options

From the initial analysis, the project team chose to focus on the following options:

- An 11-16 school
- A through school
- A 14-19 hub

An outline of the opportunities and risks posed by each option follows.

Option 1: An 11-16 school	
Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retains community support • Builds on the strengths of the current school • Supports community cohesion • Delivers stability and improved viability • Enables a stronger focus on improved outcomes at 16 • Builds on existing partnerships • Could attract new partners • Maintains school places in the centre of the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient capacity for rapid improvement • Continued risks around viability if there were perceptions that school had not changed
Ideas to reduce risk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure strong partners to work with the school to refresh the vision and drive improvements (through a trust or academy model) • Refresh the image through a name change and strong 'marketing' 	

Option 2: A through-school (0-16)	
Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could provide strong seamless transition for children from one key stage to the next • Could retain community support • Embraces the strengths of the current school • Builds on existing partnerships between the high school and primary schools • Supports community cohesion • Could deliver a strong extended services school model • Could attract new partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not attracting new parents if the model is seen as too radical • Issues around shared access • Exposes the school to another radically different model after the federation experience • Possible disruption to existing strong primary provision • Complexity of delivering improved performance across all key stages
Ideas to reduce risk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from through-school models elsewhere in the country 	

APPENDIX 3

Option 3: 14-16 hub	
Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good central site • Economies of scale • Builds on existing staff specialisms • Improves coherence of the 16-16 vocational offer • Builds business engagement • Flexible use of the site which could embrace, for example, an enterprise centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the social cohesion issues arising from the consultation • Requires significant capital investment • Revenue challenge • Local schools and colleges might not commit • If no school or college is prepared to manage the facility
Ideas to reduce risk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure the leadership of a school or college • Establish a partnership involving local schools and colleges • Run alongside an 11-16 school (option 1) 	

APPENDIX 4

Summary of Respondents

City of Leeds - Summary of respondents (letters and e-mails)

Pupils	93
Staff	44
Community representatives	18
Parent	9
Elected representatives	3
Governing Body	1
Union	1
LMU	1
Colleges Group	1
Other	4
Grand Total	175

APPENDIX 5

Submission from the Governing Body

RESPONSE TO STATUTORY NOTICE TO CLOSE CITY OF LEEDS HIGH SCHOOL

The Governors, stakeholders and partners remain strongly opposed to the closure of the school for the reasons set out in the Submissions made during the previous consultation period (attached – attachment 1 : Part 1: submissions against closure).

Since then the school has received a positive OFSTED report, following a 'no notice' inspection (dated 10 May 2010) which contained no areas of concern (report attached – attachment 2). The lead inspector saw that the school was making progress under Headteacher Gary Lovelace and that it had capacity to improve.

We believe that the best way forward for the school now is by way of evolution rather than by way of imposition and by continuing and accelerating the current improvement work.

The school is continuing to strengthen links with its 5 feeder primaries and is exploring flexibility within the KS3 curriculum and staff deployment across KS2/3.

Also it is developing teaching and learning through:

- Coaching projects
- A commitment to school university partnerships which support on-going professional learning and development
- School based inset
- Intervention strategies including five plus, 1-2-1 tuition, targeting groups within cohorts, G&T extension projects
- Reinforcing attendance through a number of currently successful strategies

The school and the governing body are also exploring a number of future projects

- Links with business partners
- Links with education partners
- Becoming an EAL centre of excellence
- Links with higher education partners
- The possible benefits of trust status

We would urge the council not to approve closure of the school and instead support the school development and school improvement. This would then be in keeping with the Council's own stated objectives for local community schools. The implications of closure are devastating for the local community and would have significant transport issues for the City. We believe it would damage outcomes for our cohort of students.

In our original submissions we set out in part 2 our action plan and we believe we are having some real success –as borne out by OFSTED. Witness the current school-university partnership with Leeds Met, which began in 2008 with TDA

APPENDIX 5

funding as part of the 'CPD in schools in challenging circumstances' initiative. At that time, a small group of teachers volunteered for the 'Side-by-side learning' project joining a professional learning community across the Inner West family of schools.

The teachers attended workshops on teacher research and worked with academic partners to develop their action inquiries over a nine month set time and to present this work at an end-of-project teachers' conference. Even with time constraints, this work proved fruitful in terms of teachers' learning about posing research questions and problem solving.

This work continues informally at City of Leeds High School with academic partner Professor Lori Beckett, who is supporting teachers collaborative work to teach well in this school, especially given situations that are not always easy.

There are plans in place for this work to continue on a more formal basis and to involve the whole staff in learning from teaching at City of Leeds High School, subject to negotiations with Leeds Met about cost requirements and time release for teachers.

Also, Professor Beckett has asked the school to participate in the 'Leading Learning' project, which is being developed for up to 30 schools with funding arrangements currently being negotiated with Education Leeds Deputy Chief Executive Dirk Gilleard in tandem with Interim Director of Children's Services Eleanor Brazil.

It is hoped that City of Leeds High School will sponsor a small group of teachers to join other participating teachers, attend the series of public seminars, and work with academic partners to jointly engage in knowledge building and contribute to school improvement. This collaborate work will help teachers at City of Leeds High School to consolidate their efforts to improve learning outcomes and share their learning with the whole staff in their joint efforts to raise standards.

We are also working already in cooperation with our feeder primaries to improve and evolve into a community school and improve our provision of extended services, and are investigating the feasibility of becoming a cooperative trust. This work will also ensure that the school remains viable but restoring the levels of students coming to the school – and that we believe we can demonstrate will happen once the statutory notice period is concluded. A decision to close without appropriate caveats would of course damage that work now being done.

We urge the Council to vote AGAINST closure of the school

The School is already working with Dirk Gilleard and Education Leeds and the Council and a group of stakeholders and is looking at all options for the future of secondary education on the site – but it is clear that options being considered do **NOT** require closure of the School and that the school can be supported in accelerating improvements already made and innovative new projects with partners or additional institutional arrangements on the site and extended facilities

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all of which can happen without the need for closure. A full report will be delivered to the Council at the end of July but we would ask that this work is not jeopardized in the meantime.

If a decision on closure is made we would expect it to be hedged with caveats that no closure should take place on 31 August 2011 UNLESS viable plans are approved by the Council for an institution to open on the City of Leeds site on 1 September 2011 that would ensure continuing secondary education for the community and would build upon the achievements of the school already and would improve outcomes for those children.

However we are of the view that the progress already being made is such that the Council should vote AGAINST closure.

-

To:
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Any questions about this proposal should be addressed to the Chair of Governors
c/o City of Leeds High School

attachments 1+2:

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Attachment 1 – Prior submissions

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION OVER THE FUTURE OF CITY OF LEEDS HIGH SCHOOL ACTION PLAN FOR CITY OF LEEDS

Preamble

This document is prepared on behalf of the Governors of City of Leeds School (COLS) (currently part of the Central Leeds Learning Federation).

This document is submitted to Education Leeds (EL) and directly to the Executive Board of the Leeds City Council

Summary

The Governors are unanimously opposed to the closure of COLS. We believe it will be detrimental for the current students and the local community. We believe closure will NOT assist the students at COLS get better grades or better outcomes (which seems to be the driving force behind the closure plan) and in fact will DAMAGE the immediate futures of that cohort and will cause significant and lasting damage in the local community.

However we recognise that COLS is a school which faces challenges and we believe there are structural solutions that can accelerate improvements at the school and grow its role in its local community in a positive way.

- Part 1 explains the case against closure
- Part 2 sets out our alternative plan to closure

PART 1

Background - the case against closure

City of Leeds School serves an area that is culturally diverse but also one which is vulnerable and economically deprived. The community came out in force at the consultation meeting at COLS on Wednesday 10th February 2010 to express deep concern that an area that needs support might in fact be losing its only High School. The community was deeply alarmed by this prospect. The School offers services not just to its students but a variety of organisations in the local community.

The School also has strong partnerships with other local schools and colleges which have been built up over a long period of time that now risk being lost. The school was passionately and, it seemed, unanimously supported by parents and students (past and present) and community leaders and described as 'magical'.

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Hilary Benn MP (letter dated 9th February 2010) supports the school and recognises that uncertainty hanging over the school (for many years now) has been very difficult. He is concerned that closure of the school would have a big (negative) impact on the local community. He recognises that City of Leeds supports a very wide range of pupils, including many children from other parts of the world who arrive with or without their families and most with little or no English – and the skill in EAL which staff have acquired is a strong feature of the school recognised by OFSTED. Indeed the school has considerable strengths and expertise with students from diverse backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language that it would be a terrible shame to lose – as once that 'magic' is lost it will never be recovered. Hilary Benn MP lends support to an action plan for improvement rather than closure.

Greg Mulholland MP from the neighbouring Leeds North west constituency has also raised concerns and written in support of the school (letter 27th January 2010) that the closure of City of Leeds School will *"irreversibly damage the local community and have a detrimental effect on schooling provision in the area"* and he is *"concerned about the impact the potential closure will have on the family of schools in the local area"*.

The result on February 18th of the local by-election in Hyde Park & Woodhouse showed that each of the five candidates actively campaigned to save COLS: with some 2000 odd residents voting amongst such candidates. Where is there any evidence of any one in the community who advocates closure? We do not believe there is any. The executive board of the Council could not dare speak of closing COLS as benefiting students or the community when it is clear that the overwhelming majority view is in favour of the school remaining.

City of Leeds has always had positive OFSTED reports¹. It has never been placed in any category of special measures or alike. Its National Challenge rating last year was changed from red to amber – meaning the school could meet its targets for 2011 with support.

COLS when it formed a Federation with Primrose (with support from the DfE) was in rude health financially. Primrose High School had a legacy deficit from problems with its new PFI build (e.g. ICT was not included when it needed to be and there were significant problems with the roof and open staircases between sections of the building) and in effect funds from COLS were able to shore up Primrose to some extent (e.g. with ICT provision!). However for the last decade the school has faced threats of closure and has had three formal sets of consultations. In the last couple of years in particular there have been regular stories in the local papers focusing on COLS closing and the children moving perhaps to a site in East Leeds (Parklands). That has had a devastating impact on the roll. It came at just the wrong time for the school because COLS staff had been working for the last 2 years on building relationships with feeder schools. However strong anecdotal evidence spoke of parents saying they wanted to send their children to COLS - but

¹ OFSTED say of COLS it is "a truly inclusive school where the needs of all students are catered for well. Students make satisfactory progress in their learning"

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they simply could not consider doing that if their child's education would be disrupted part way through. The local cluster of schools send an agreed letter to EL setting out their evidence that this was so. This was such an understandable response we had no counter argument against it and the roll for year 7 last year was significantly depressed: along with changes to post 16 funding this has created a sudden and significant budget deficit. The school is currently taking steps to manage and reduce that deficit. However as was very clear from the meeting on 10.02.2010 and the evidence now provided by the local returns collected by Jill Wood – there are lots of children who will return to preferencing COLS once the threat of closure is lifted - and whose parents want them to be able to walk to a local school. We are in a classic 'chicken and egg' situation here – but the proposal we set out below explains how to fix this dilemma and retain continuity for years 7, 8 and 9 who will be the most severely disrupted by the closure of COLS.

It must also be noted that demographically there are some 1500 children in the area who could come to COLS of which 13% currently do. Given the number of stories about COLS closing it is remarkable it is that many. There is a baby boom and growing population in the inner city and signs of regeneration with old flats being knocked down and revitalised in the local community and families moving back into the area. If COLS close there will simply not be enough places in the centre/ centre east areas of Leeds and in the very near future the city will have a significant lack of provision. Given that COLS is so well located (at Hyde Park) and has a campus that is subject to covenants requiring use of the land for educational purposes – it is madness to close this site at this time.

City of Leeds remains a good school and as a general rule councils should not close good schools. There was, at the public consultation, no one advocating closure. Although our number of first preferences fell and we had a low year 7 intake last year the reasons for this have been discussed above. Those parents who did not preference the school have none the less come out in support of COLS having experienced how the school nurtures its children². The league table figures do mask many of our achievements.³ (Although that is not to shy away from the need to make radical and rigorous improvements to teaching and learning and attainment which we believe the proposal below addresses).

Further it is government and local council policy to encourage students to walk to school where possible and to cut down on excessive journeys to school. The closure of COLS will significantly add to traffic congestion in Leeds and cause many students to have to move long distances: for many it will mean using two buses and for a deprived area that will be a significant barrier to good future attendance. Two wards (Headingley and Hyde Park & Woodhouse – would lose a secondary school within walking distance). Realistically many challenged children will not get up maybe an extra hour earlier to travel nor pay for such travel and

² One parent whose first choice was Lawnswood was so pleased with her child's progress at COLS she then sent the three younger siblings to the school!

³ For example 4 of our children were admitted to Notre Dame last year to study 4 science A levels – selected from over 700 applicants.

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attendance and attainment will suffer – with additional concerns for the health wellbeing and safety of those children. Similarly there will be a negative impact on the number of students accessing extended services if they have longer journeys to get home, and distance from school will discourage parents from attending school functions, parents' evenings, and alike.

DfE has a guide (last updated 28/7/09) on "*closing a maintained mainstream school – a guide for local authorities and governing bodies*". It includes considering standards of education, diversity of education, every child matters, provision for displaced students, impact on community, community cohesion and race equality and travel, 14-19 curriculum education and special education needs (EALS) and children with disabilities.

It is contended that applying these considerations the closure of COLS could not reasonably be supported by the local authority. There is no evidence that the students of COLS (individually or collectively) would do better if they are displaced. Some of the schools it is proposed they be displaced to face equal challenges to COLS and/or have themselves struggled with National Challenge targets or recent OFSTED inspections.

If COLS closes there will not be a small secondary school in Leeds or the inner city. Diversity of education will be impaired. In East Leeds the only choice available to parents will be Academies. How does that improve diversity? What about parents who want to send their child to a smaller sized school or one that is maintained and governed by local people? Both of those are perfectly reasonable choices parents might want to make and yet such parents will no longer be able to exercise such choice. In particular many parents of children with SEN choose COLS for its expertise with SEN children and because it is believed, probably correctly, that such provision is improved by being delivered in a smaller school.

We believe a school like COLS should be treasured as a school that is involving inclusive and a good community school. The Warnock report stated the aims of education are "*first to enlarge a child's knowledge, experienced and imaginative understanding and thus his awareness of moral values and capacity for enjoyment, and secondly to enable him to enter the world after formal education is over an active participant in society and a responsible contributor to it, capable of achieving as much independence as possible.*" These aims are the same for all children and not just those who are the most academically gifted. The current focus on targets for a minority of the cohort, risks ignoring all the good that is done for the COLS student population as a whole.

The impact on the local community would be so great and so negative that it is the community itself that has come out in force to support a rescue plan for COLS. We are particularly pleased that we are supported in this proposal by JILL WOOD (Head of Little London Primary) and on behalf of Inner West family of schools comprising Little London, Rose Bank, Blenheim, Quarry Mount and Brudenell.

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The school and community are unanimous in their opposition to closure of the school and wish to support and advocate the following alternative proposal – with a request that when considering this proposal the Executive Board permit the governors to advocate the alternatives discussed in this document directly (and not via an agent or representative of EL⁴).

The stakeholders and community representatives are submitting their own documents in support of these proposals and adding further detail on the plans for changing the governance and leadership of the school and for driving forward improvements to teaching and learning.

PART 2

A compelling proposal for an alternative structural solution to the future of City of Leeds school

ACTION PLAN – our proposals for change a “Collaborative Trust”

This will involve the dissolution of the Federation and a new structure of governance for COLS.

The school will be supported by its 5 local feeder primaries and the Open XS local learning community and would seek to work with existing partners and develop new partners who will support improvements in teaching and learning at the school and the development of the school as a centre for excellence: in particular we envisage the school site as an extended community school and EAL centre for Leeds whilst also building upon its acknowledged strengths in vocational provision on site – whilst keeping parity of esteem of such provision with academic courses. A collaborative approach would see a vision of ‘through schooling’ within the local community and a change to the way Key Stage 3 is taught.⁵

We propose to bring on board education partners, professional improvement and social and business partners⁶ to support the Trust – with each partner given a role in governance of the Trust.

⁴ We are concerned that Education Leeds are not merely consulting on closure but are actively advocating the closure of City of Leeds School and this is the impression of the community following the interview given by Chris Edwards on Radio Leeds on Wednesday 10 February 2010 where he unhelpfully derided value-added at the school as “dreadful, it's dreadful” and later asked ‘Would you send your kids there?’

⁵ Please see separate submissions from the stakeholders/OPEN XS group for their approach to KS3.

⁶ All significant partners who work with the school on developing improved access for lifelong learning, improved curriculum and support for teaching and learning - whether Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Leeds College, Notre Dame, The Universities, local businesses (the school already works with HEAT and KIER) Leeds College of Building, College of Art, College of Music or alike will be represented in the trust model of governance to embed accountability and responsibility by the school in making improvements and ensure that significant stakeholders remain committed to the school in the long term.

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This is a 'ground up' proposal radically different from what the community had perceived as a 'top down' approach when the Federation was formed. We can say this with confidence because this action plan is rooted in proposals that have been drawn up within the community itself and the evidence from the meeting Wed 10/02/2010 shows that the community (being the students, the parents, residents associations, local schools, councillors and the two local MPs) are all firmly behind this proposal.

Further the governance of COLS was perceived to have had weaknesses – due in part perhaps to the governing body having to govern two schools instead of one, and in the past there was a lack of direct community involvement at governance level. The community did not feel any ownership of the 'Federation' that formed, albeit it is recognised that for many students and staff cross site and curriculum support developed during the Federation was in fact positive in improving teachers' learning best practice and widening curriculum choices.⁷ There was also a perception and recurring complaint by the Executive Head of the Federation that the Federation never enjoyed the support of Education Leeds.

It is envisaged that despite the dissolution of the Federation much of the progress made by working with Primrose High School will still be retained through collaboration on curriculum provision and colleagues working together to improve teaching and learning. Further in the last 6 months COLS has made an appointment of a head teacher who with support from Simon Flowers of Carr Manor is now driving forward staffing changes and improvements in core teaching and learning. Such work is bearing fruit and attendance levels at COLS have improved dramatically. This work needs to be built on and not reversed.

The proposed Trust would use innovative strategies for leadership whilst rooting ownership of the collaborative trust in the community.

We believe this plan would work by bringing stakeholders directly into the running and governance of the school and it can drive forward school improvement through a radically different approach to governance and leadership.

Another innovative way of working is to build up the school-university partnership already established with Leeds Met, which began in 2008 under the auspices of the TDA-funded project, 'CPD in schools in challenging circumstances', and which was developed in COLS and five schools in the Inner North West family of schools. This enabled academic partners to provide teachers with professional learning and development and support teacher-led action inquiries. This work was showcased in an end-of-project teacher conference in Leeds and again in Sydney, Australia, at a national conference devoted to partnership work in

⁷ Education Leeds have accepted that the Federation model had flaws in that COLS would have been better partnered with a school that was in significantly different circumstances from COLS. Structural changes involved in building the Federation and time and resources dedicated to the three recent consultations on the closure of COLS must be recognised as drains on resources that have impacted on the progress of the school in the past.

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disadvantaged schools. Leeds Met is open to continuing this work on a formal basis, subject to negotiation.⁸

That work and indeed the partnerships COLS made during the time of the Federation were recognised by the Australian government as being of interest – and a template for how to support inner city schools in Australia.

We commend the above proposal and believe there are compelling reasons to change COLS to a collaborative trust model and to reinvigorate it as an extended community school and centre for life long learning.

We recognise that the proposal needs to address a number of significant matters and set out below

1. Falling Numbers

We propose to form a formal partnership with the 5 primary feeders schools – wrapped in a trust umbrella. The feeder schools would nominate governors to the board of the Trust (along with other business and education partners who would do the same) that would govern the new school on the COLS site: and pre-school transition classes would be run on site. The school would intensify it's 'road shows' to the primaries and entry criteria would favour the linked primaries.

The school/trust should work with LCC/EL and its students on a favoured name re-branding exercise for the school: and adopt a new name and logo from August 2011 to signify the radical change.⁹

Once the threat of closure is over – it is clear from evidence now presented that numbers will recover.¹⁰ As birth rates increase this area needs high school provision and the community needs a secondary school.

2. Achievement

⁸ A further submission on behalf of stakeholders including the LMU has been forwarded under separate cover. Most of the current COLS 6th form go onto local universities especially LMU. The current 6th form do the LMU 'progression module' which gives them 30 UCAS points if they go to LMU or other similar universities participating in the scheme. This has been invaluable in ensuring a university place for students who have needed to overcome significant barriers to success. The proposed trust could build on this with LMU having a more significant presence earlier in a pupil's school life and helping to make progression to university seem not only possible but also something worthwhile and welcoming.

⁹ This has been a controversial proposal and not one wholly supported within school. However it is submitted that it is vital if we are to build pride in the new institution it must have some visible radical break from the past and adopt a new name, logo, new uniform and a change to decor and colour scheme in school. The school needs a new sign with a picture of the frankly impressive building and facilities right on the main road to draw the community closer to the school and vice versa as the campus is currently a little too hidden from the road.

¹⁰ The result of the Open consultation showed that 75% of Respondents wanted their children to walk to the a local school. 2 of the four local primaries are moving to two form entry and a third to one and half as demand increases locally.

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It is contended that splitting the local community and sending children to a variety of different local schools – dependent upon entry criteria and different curriculum provision – and with attendant transport problems is likely to cause a FALL in attendance among students and to reduce their motivation and attainment levels. If the school is being closed for failing to meet national challenge targets it is not thought likely that challenged pupils perhaps from poor backgrounds will see any improvement to their learning if forced against their will to get up every day perhaps an hour or so earlier to travel by one or two buses to other schools – some of which also meet challenges with their national challenge targets or OFSTED inspections.¹¹

Rather continued and rapid improvement is likely to be achieved by the current levels of intense intervention (national challenge funding, school improvement partner and adviser scrutiny, national leaders in education, and direct leadership and HR support currently being offered: all of which are showing highly positive results but need more time to work through). We propose to continue and build upon partnerships with other leaders (inc Simon Flowers of Carr Manor) and senior leadership of Primrose High Academy to learn best practice for leadership and governance.

Additional support is proposed through establishing professional learning community partnerships with Leeds College and the two Universities in the first instance that will assist core teaching and learning and lead to authentic changes in teaching practice and improved student learning outcomes.

The school-university partnership model in challenging schools has already delivered when trialed in Little London Community Primary School in 2006 and was show to be effective with inter-school Learning Support Unit, behaviour management, creative curriculum with particular reference to ethnic minorities, and white working-class underachievement.

We propose to build upon this work under the Trust umbrella and extend ongoing trials where two groups of teacher partners are already working to address underachievement and alienation, with academic partners' support, and continuation of the 'Leading Learning project'. It is proposed that University and College partners would be able to appoint governors to the board of the new trust that would govern the school.

¹¹ OFSTED say of COLS it is "a truly inclusive school where the needs of all students are catered for well. Students make satisfactory progress in their learning" & "This is a vibrant and caring school. The school is highly committed to the care and welfare of its student and has worked hard to enable students to succeed."

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It is to be noted that our feeder primary school partners (Open XS) have seen rapid improvements in their results. The model of more rigorous leadership and cultural changes that have been successful there would be disseminated through the Trust - embedded through its new governance.

3. Leadership / Governance

We acknowledge that there have been significant weaknesses in Leadership and Governance in the past – hence the desire of this proposal to address those issues. We believe the support now in place and changes to the senior management team at COLS are a good grounding for the future and that the radical change to governance proposed by this plan would consolidate that improvement and drive forward change more rapidly.

4. Attendance

Attendance figures are already showing an upward trend. The school is already on course to make significant and continuing progress in this regard. The school has recently been rewarded for its progress in this regard.¹²

5. Budget/Structural change

The existing school arrangement cannot survive the dissolution of the Federation. It is proposed that there be a new 11-19 Trust schools– in which the majority of the existing staff are retained and put to use in the Trust school – building on their core expertise in vocational courses and acknowledged expertise with pastoral work with students and the community.

The new school would take a new name and be an extended school. It should be a site for three new hubs that are run by the trust and EL across the wedges.

(1) A 'centre of excellence' for EAL including new on site provision for an all year intensive English school to bring students who drop into the roll mid year up to speed in English as quickly as possible – which is currently a major barrier to learning and national challenge and attainment. To that end EAL provision on site be extended to operate outside term time, offering EAL pupils across the city the opportunity to be brought up to speed in English as quickly as possible. As part of an extended school the same service should be offered with learning skills/external funding to adults – especially parents of school children. This will see dramatic improvements in attainment. During term time the dedicated EAL staff can continue to offer both individualized and group learning packages for New To English students both within and alongside the mainstream curriculum in an inclusive and integrated fashion

¹² OFSTED say "Attendance has improved and meets the targets set by the DfE".

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- (2) Enhanced vocational/diploma provision on site. COLS is a recognised as a pioneer in this field.¹³ 14-19 curriculum can be improved city wide by the new trust working in partnership with nearby schools and colleges to offer provision to children on roll elsewhere. A charge can be made for accessing these services. There is room on campus to build additional provision for this and being in the centre of Leeds we are well placed to take such students.

It is believed that this organic and evolutionary approach to 14-19 provision – starting with a centre of excellence at the COLS campus could grow into a virtual hub in the inner city for the provision of 14-19 options across the city and offers young people much greater choice and thus improved engagement. The COLS campus is very central and readily accessible to many other local schools. The staff are also already strongly experienced in providing an inclusive environment and in developing individual learning – skills that will be essential to retain if a 14-19 centre is to be a centre of excellence. At present there is a lot of alternative provision scattered around the city and it would make sense to pool some of that alternative provision on the COLS campus. Making a charge for provision provided to students on roll elsewhere would assist the new trust school whilst intake numbers return to viable levels.

- (3) A focus on lifelong learning and enterprise for the community and our students. The DFCC is already on site and with enhanced vocational provision as well it is hoped the new Trust will encourage businesses to fund provision for post 14-19 for children and adults to be delivered on site. It is particularly important to note that for EAL children one or both parents may also need support with English (spoken and written) and offering life long learning for adults in the community will assist parents in mentoring their own children and will boost attainment.

6. Staffing

It must be recognised that the staff at COLS are committed and long serving and have a great deal of expertise in dealing with a culturally

¹³ We have, for example, two professional standard workrooms (Building Trades/Construction and Health & Beauty) and a Diploma Suite already being made available to students from elsewhere. The school has great sports and music facilities and science facilities and the City Learning Centre attached to it on campus. The school was originally built for 900 children including those with disabilities (we have lifts). It would be a great shame to waste such a good site and facilities. The City Learning Centre has direct indoor communication with the school. In the event that the DFC funding - which ends next year, is not renewed, it would be an ideal base for our vision of life long learning, extended services, EAL and further 14-19 provision. Already 54 young people from three schools (COLS, Primrose and Carr Manor) are working towards diplomas and apprenticeships with us. The professional standard salon and building trades room have spare capacity that could be hired out to other organisations or used as part of expanded 14-19 provision. There is an overall shortage of building trades workers across the city and experienced planners and it is understood business partners would be keen to work with the school, EL and LCC to enhance vocational provision on site. Such impetus will be lost if the school is closed instead.

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diverse mix of children (over 70 different languages are spoken at COLS). It must be noted that given its inner city location and cohort behaviour at COLS is exceptionally good and this is held together by the long serving experienced staff at the schools. Such long servicing staff must be maintained if the 'magic' of the school in that regard is not to be lost.¹⁴ Enhanced EAL and Diploma provision on site will need to retain such staff if Leeds is to offer its children quality provision.

7. Parental Participation

It is contended that this has been an area of significant weakness in the past – but that this proposal seeks to address this with new levels of parent participation through support and governance.

8. Transition

For years 5,6, 7 and 8 it is envisaged that once the threat of closure is lifted the school role will recover dramatically. A local focus on transition in partnership with the feeder primaries will better prepare children for the move to High School and in turn improve levels of attainment and value added at Key Stages 2 and 3 – which will then feed through to accelerated learning in later Key Stages. However it must also be recognised that as every child matters it is essential that the site also offers enhanced EAL provision for students who join role mid year and do not speak English so they can access learning faster and that we enhance vocational provision for students who would not otherwise engage with a wholly academic programme.

9. Widening participation

We envisage that other partners could and should work with the Trust. These can include the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, existing secondary schools in the wedge, the Leeds College, the Universities and business partners. (see footnotes 6 and 13).

This plan is commended to Education Leeds and the Executive Board of the Leeds City Council. We too want better outcomes for young people and our community – but with your support this plan is the best way to achieve that. We can save the city a lot of money and its children a lot of disruption by building on what we already have whilst adopting the structural leadership and governance changes proposed above: which we believe are both radical, sensible, proportionate and likely to embed improvements to teaching and learning and attainment whilst commanding the support of the community.

- o o o -

To:

¹⁴ Though it is to be noted that despite the threat of closure COLS has also been successful in recruiting a recent influx of new talented young staff who have begun to make their own impact on the school and whose enthusiasm and skill is also valued. Many have expressed their support for these proposals and stated that they consider themselves lucky to work in the school.

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Any questions about this proposal should be addressed to the Chair of Governors
c/o City of Leeds High School

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Attachment 2 – OFSTED letter 10 May 2010

10 May 2010

Mr Gary Lovelace
Interim Headteacher
City of Leeds School
Woodhouse Cliff
Leeds
LS6 2LG

Dear Mr Lovelace

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when my colleague and I inspected your school on 7 May 2010, for the time you gave to our pre-inspection discussions and for the information you and your senior management team provided during our visit. I would be grateful if you passed on my thanks to the governor and the local authority representative we spoke to. I would also appreciate it if you thanked the students we talked to at lunchtime. They were very cooperative.

Since the last inspection an interim headteacher has been appointed and the leadership team has been reorganised. There has been an influx of students from West Africa, Eastern Europe, South and Central Asia. A number of them are asylum seekers or refugees. There are plans to close the school in August 2011 and the number of students on roll is falling. The school is part of the National Challenge.

As a result of the inspection on 11 and 12 March 2009, the school was asked to:

- increase the rate of achievement across the school so that standards are closer to those found nationally
- increase attendance to match national averages
- increase the proportion of lessons in which students make good or better progress
- analyse and evaluate data more incisively at whole-school level to improve its effectiveness in accelerating student achievement, particularly at Key Stage 3.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made **satisfactory progress** in making improvements and **satisfactory progress** in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement. After a false dawn, there is now clear evidence that the school has made some progress in addressing the identified areas for improvement since the last inspection. However, there remains substantial further work to do before it can begin to claim that students are receiving the high quality education they deserve.

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For several years students' achievement, even when set against their low starting points and compared with their peers in similar schools has been inadequate. The standards they attain have been significantly below national averages. This is true particularly among White British and Pakistani students who are the two largest groups in school. Despite strong indications from tracking data and evidence of enhanced standards, and accelerated progress at the time of the last inspection, the examination results for Year 11 in 2009 were again disappointing. Indeed, in the crucial subjects of English and mathematics the majority of students failed to meet their targets or make the expected two levels of progress during Key Stage 4.

In the face of this failure the school has reflected upon, reviewed and refined its improvement strategy. They have embraced much needed external support. They have also developed a more strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach which recognises the interrelated nature of the areas for improvement. They have redoubled their efforts over the past nine months and have been rewarded with some improvement in each aspect area, but decisively in students' achievement.

The cumulative effect of a more effective and reliable assessment and target-setting system; tailoring the curriculum to match students' individual needs better; tightening monitoring and evaluation procedures with an emphasis on proactive support; and, enhancing teachers' confidence and skills through professional development and training, is beginning to make a noticeable difference. During the inspection the majority of students observed were making broadly satisfactory and good progress. This position is confirmed by the school's own robust data and recent assessments, which reveal around two thirds of students are set to match their 'amended' (national challenge) targets. Though these are some way short of their 'official' targets, it represents a significant improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection. In Year 11, for example, this shows 24% of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, as opposed to the 12% who achieved that feat in each of the past two years.

Attendance, although still below average, is steadily improving as a result of the effective strategies used by the school and the high profile it is given. Despite the school day changing significantly so that students start much earlier than previously, attendance has risen from 87.3% at the time of the last inspection to 89.4%. Over the same period persistent absence rates have fallen from 16.5% to 10.31%.

The school clearly has a number of effective teachers who consistently promote good or better learning and progress among students. It has invested heavily in training, mentoring and coaching from external advisors and consultants. The school's leaders are also sharing the best practice they observe from teaching monitoring within the school. The proportion of good or better teaching has risen from 53% at the time of the last inspection to 60%. This was confirmed by observations during the inspection and the school's monitoring data. The school knows this trend must continue if it is to eradicate the legacy of underachievement and enable pupils to recover the lost ground in their knowledge, skills and

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understanding. There remains some inconsistency, and students' learning ranged from inadequate to outstanding during the inspection.

The school is growing more discerning in its use of data. School leaders are looking beyond overall progression rates and standards, and paying much closer attention to the relative impact of their improvement strategies for individuals and groups of students throughout the school. By establishing each individual student's starting point (including the significant number new to the school) they are able to set appropriate targets and closely monitor students' progress towards them. By carefully analysing the data from the regular assessments that are undertaken, they are able to evaluate the extent to which students are on track to reach their targets. They have built-in early warning indicators that trigger suitable interventions to stop students falling behind, or provide additional challenge where students are coasting or improving rapidly. They are also better able to identify particular patterns and trends in student attainment. The signs are that these actions are beginning to work and rates of progress are accelerating in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, particularly among White British and Pakistani students.

The interim headteacher knows the school well and with the support of his senior managers and the local authority has set out a clear plan of action to rid the school of the root causes of sustained underachievement. Overall, progress has been slow, but it has accelerated more recently, with clear green shoots of improvement. Ongoing high student mobility and the high number of students for whom English is an additional language present barriers which are hindering the pace of change. As a result, the school's focus has been on trying to build secure foundations upon which to launch its recovery. Through literacy and key life skills development, the school leaders are trying to ensure that students are more readily able to access learning and the curriculum. More rigorous monitoring, more reliable assessment and a greater consistency in teaching are raising staff expectations and student aspirations.

The local authority has provided considerable, and much needed, support, advice and guidance which are only now starting to show evidence of impact. Governors are determined to use their influence to improve every aspect of the school's work.

This monitoring visit included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely
John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

APPENDIX 6

Detailed responses to the issues raised by objectors

Quality of provision on offer and successful Ofsted monitoring visit

City of Leeds High School faces significant challenges. The standards achieved by students in the school are very low compared with those achieved by students of a similar background in other local schools. This is shown by the value added statistics for the students in the school. It is recognised that there has been some improvement, but we need to see this impact faster on the achievements of young people. Not enough young people are succeeding and reaching their potential at the present time. Within the context of the National Challenge, the local authority is obliged to consider structural changes to accelerate improvements for the students at the school. The government has raised its expectations of the minimum standards schools must achieve, and the timescale to achieve them.

The strengths of the school are acknowledged and recognised, as reported in the most recent full inspection report. Despite these strengths the school has not been able to ensure that enough young people are succeeding and reaching their potential at the present time. The school has consistently struggled to support enough young people to achieve good grades and is at high risk of not reaching the floor target of 30% of young people achieving five A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths by 2011.

The purpose of the Ofsted monitoring visit in May was to gauge the progress that the school had made in addressing the key issues identified in the Ofsted report of March 2009. It was not a new inspection that sought to assess the school against the new framework. The inspector found that the school had 'made some progress' but that there was 'substantial further work to do before it can begin to claim that students are receiving the high quality of education they deserve.'

The monitoring visit report notes that despite the evidence of school data offered at the 2009 inspection, the examination results for 2009 were again disappointing, and that students failed to meet their targets. 'In the face of this failure...' the report comments, 'they have embraced much needed external support.' This support has provided the capacity for the school to make what are described as 'green shoots of improvement.' The Local Authority needed to reassure the inspector during the inspection that this support would continue at the highest level.

The new OfSTED inspection framework, against which the school has not yet been assessed, has much higher expectations of schools. The very low levels of attainment, self evaluated as inadequate by the school, and the declining three-year trend in value added measures would place the school at a very high risk of receiving an inadequate judgment in a future full inspection.

Community Resource

A number of respondents identified a potential negative impact on the local community should the school close. However, the school struggles to attract children from its local area or community. Not enough parents are choosing City of Leeds for their children. This will have to be addressed as a priority through the new governance arrangements being

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proposed for the school. Together all these partners, including the Local Authority, must remove any uncertainty over the school's future in order to assist establishing new demand.

The school does have many in-year admissions because of the number of surplus places that exist and its central location making it the nearest school with places for a large part of the central area of the city. These in-year admissions are predominantly children who are placed at the school by the Admissions Team, not because parents have chosen it or because it is necessarily their nearest school. Given the operation of city wide admission arrangements this situation is likely to continue.

Transition Arrangements

The objections on this issue are now directly addressed by the revised recommendation to retain an 11-16 school on the site.

Alternative Proposals

The response to various alternative proposals made by objectors are addressed in the main body of the report

Longstanding uncertainty over the future of the school and adverse media coverage directly led to the fall in numbers

The school struggles to draw in children from its local community. Only around 40 to 50 parents name City of Leeds as their first preference in the admissions process and this is insufficient to sustain a school. The remainder of the places are filled by parents who were unsuccessful in securing a place at their first preference school and either put City of Leeds as a second or third preference, or are placed at City of Leeds as the nearest school that has surplus places. This will have to be addressed as a priority through the new governance arrangements being proposed for the school. Together all these partners, including the Local Authority, must remove any uncertainty over the school's future in order to assist establishing new demand.

With Education Leeds currently having to expand local primary schools in response to a growing population will there be enough secondary places in the future?

The size of the school age population changes regularly and the school estate always has to adapt to this. With the changes to 14+ provision, there is a greater likelihood that pupils will not receive all their learning on one site in the future. The objections on this issue are now directly addressed by the revised recommendation to retain an 11-16 school on the site.

It is the local school for many pupils. Closure will mean longer journeys and higher bus fares

The objections on this issue are now directly addressed by the revised recommendation to retain an 11-16 school on the site.

Education Leeds and the City Council should not give in to government pressure

Both Education Leeds and the City Council are focused on the need to secure the best

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possible outcomes for children.

Inequality of treatment of staff at City of Leeds (facing redundancy) versus staff at Primrose (TUPE arrangements with proposed academy)

The objections on this issue are now directly addressed by the revised recommendation to retain an 11-16 school on the site.

There was inadequate consultation prior to the statutory notice

The consultation was conducted and advertised in a manner consistent with previous school organisation changes made by Education Leeds, and with DfE guidance. Letters were sent to current pupils, to local primary pupils and other local secondary schools and other local stakeholders. Posters and documents were placed in libraries and post offices. As soon as it became apparent that the governing body had not received copies of the documents through the above channels individual copies were despatched for governors' use.

Belief that proposals will not be withdrawn because of a perceived "loss of face"

Education Leeds and the City Council will continue to present, consider and determine proposals which they believe to be correct. The objections on this issue are now directly addressed by the revised recommendation to retain an 11-16 school on the site.

Closure of school would render the local Steel Band homeless

The objections on this issue are now directly addressed by the revised recommendation to retain an 11-16 school on the site.

Existing planning controls for the area could be compromised by the loss of a local high school

Whatever education provision ultimately is offered on the current City of Leeds site it will be a resource for and available to the local population. Existing planning controls should not therefore be impacted.

Closure of the school would be destroying a 125 year old tradition

Schools are not provided to maintain tradition, but to secure the best possible education for their pupils, which is the basis for the National Challenge. "City of Leeds" has existed in many forms over its 125 years, including on other sites. The tradition can be carried on as a new institution evolves that best reflects current needs. The objections on this issue are now directly addressed by the revised recommendation to retain an 11-16 school on the site.