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## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

**EXECUTIVE BOARD: 14 June 2006**

**SUBJECT: Primary Review: Horsforth Planning Area**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Executive Board of the outcomes of a review of primary provision in the Horsforth Planning Area.

#### 2.0 Proposal for the Horsforth Planning Area

2.1 The report provides a summary of the review of primary school places that has been undertaken in the area. The main options that have been considered are

**Option 1:** Maintain all existing provision

**Option 2:** Amalgamate Featherbank Infant School and Newlaithes Junior School to form a two form entry primary school

**Option 3:** Close Broadgate Primary School or amalgamate with another school in the area.

2.2 Education Leeds is of the view that there is sufficient capacity within the existing provision to meet current and projected demand.

2.3 The amalgamation of Featherbank Infant School and Newlaithes Junior School to form a through primary school would provide continuity for pupils at both schools, while establishing a larger and a more sustainable school.

2.4 As neither school has a building large enough to accommodate a two form entry school, significant investment would be needed on one of the two sites. Sources of funding need to be identified and secured as currently there is no capital funding available.

#### 3. Recommendation

3.1 To note that Education Leeds considers that an amalgamation of Featherbank Infant School and Newlaithes Junior, into a remodelled building on the junior

school site to be the best option, at the current time, for the Horsforth area.

- 3.2** Invite Education Leeds to bring forward a proposal to this effect in due course and in particular to secure the necessary capital to deliver a single site primary school.
- 3.3** Note that, following the downsizing of Broadgate Primary in 2007, no further action is presently anticipated with regard to the number or size of primary schools available in Horsforth.

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**EXECUTIVE BOARD: 14 June 2006**

**SUBJECT: Primary Review: Horsforth Planning Area**

**Electoral wards Affected:**

Horsforth

**Specific Implications For:**

Ethnic Minorities

Women

Disabled People

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the Executive Board of the outcomes of a review of primary provision in the Horsforth Planning Area.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**2.1** In February 2006, a review of primary provision was initiated as a result of a relatively high number of surplus places across the area. In addition, one school had hit the Primary Review Strategy's criterion of 25% surplus places (as specified in the School Organisation Plan for Leeds 2003 -2008), with two other schools approaching this proportion. These figures were based on January 2005 PLASC.

**2.2** The schools included in the Horsforth planning area are; Broadgate Primary School, Featherbank Infant School, Newlaithes Junior School, St Margaret's CE Primary School, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, West End Primary School, Westbrook Lane Primary School.

**2.3** As part of the review, informal consultation has taken place with the headteachers and chairs of governors of each of the schools, officers within Education Leeds and Leeds

City Council, and elected members in the Horsforth Ward.

### **3.0 MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1** The purpose of any review of provision is to ensure that all schools are thriving and sustainable and that school buildings provide an inspiring environment in which to learn. A comprehensive analysis of surplus places, admission numbers, accommodation needs, standards and community links of schools serving the area has been undertaken to develop options for the future pattern of provision.
- 3.2** The data from the January 2006 PLASC (the school census) was not available at the start of the review. When the updated information was taken into account, it became apparent that the number of pupils in the area had increased and the surplus places across the area had reduced. There are also a number of housing developments planned to be completed over the next 2 – 10 years which could have an impact on the future demand in the area.
- 3.3** There are three schools in the area that are situated very close together including the two faith schools. The Church of England school (St Margaret's) operates essentially as a community school, drawing in pupils from the immediate area whereas the Catholic primary (St Mary's) attracts pupils from a much broader area, typical of schools with a Catholic ethos.
- 3.4** Featherbank Infant and Newlathes Junior both attract pupils from a similar area. In the main Featherbank Infant is the feeder school for Newlathes junior, although a small number of children will attend other schools. These schools have experienced falling rolls in the recent past and have the highest percentage of surplus places although the numbers for Reception look to be increasing slightly. Standards are high at the two schools. Both schools have felt some financial pressures although they are currently managing balanced budgets.
- 3.5** West End Primary is oversubscribed, as is St Mary's Primary. West End's number on roll is currently greater than their net capacity. These two schools, along with Westbrook Lane Primary are expected to be full in Reception for September 2006.
- 3.6** Provision in the Horsforth area cannot be viewed in isolation from primary provision in its neighbouring planning area, Cookridge. There is some pupil movement into Horsforth from this area with some parents not choosing to send their children to their nearest primary school.
- 3.7** There are a small number of housing developments in the area that may have an impact on future provision in the area. A particularly large development is planned on the site of the old Kirkstall Forge, with outline planning permission anticipated soon. It is expected this will have around 1350 mixed dwellings and will be completed over a 10 year period. It is difficult to predict with any confidence whether any children generated from this development will choose to attend the Horsforth schools as there are a number of different options.
- 3.8 Options for the future pattern of provision in the Horsforth area**
- 3.9** It is important that any proposals to change provision consider the geographical location of schools in the context of housing development plans and potential future demographic demand. Three options and variations have been suggested during informal consultation with key stakeholders and these are presented here with a brief

comment on each option.

**3.10 Option 1: Maintain all existing schools and secure alternative use for surplus accommodation in Broadgate Primary**

**3.11** Using current projections, the existing schools are sufficient to satisfy demand for places in Horsforth schools, with overall surplus capacity standing at 10%. This provides some flexibility to accommodate an increase in future demand arising from demographic changes or housing developments in the area. Broadgate Primary has sufficient spare capacity to accommodate a Childrens Centre to serve all of Horsforth, which allied to a planned reduction in admission limit in 2007 will remove a concentration of surplus places in this school.

**3.12 Option 2: Amalgamate Featherbank Infant School and Newlaithes Junior School to form a through primary school on the Newlaithes site**

**3.13** The suggestion to amalgamate Featherbank Infant School and Newlaithes Junior School to form a 60 place primary school would provide greater flexibility in terms of school organisation and resources, particularly with regard to Finance and Staffing, as economies of scale can be achieved. Although both schools are currently managing their Budgets successfully, there have been financial pressures in the past. Bringing the two schools together would establish a secure, sustainable school.

The two schools currently serve pupils from a very similar geographic area. Consolidating provision on one site will benefit parents who drop off and collect children from both the infant and junior school. It will enable continuity across the two phases avoiding the need for transition arrangements.

There is insufficient space on the Featherbank site for a two form of entry school, however, there would be sufficient to support a one and a half form of entry school (complying with the DfES minimum guidelines). This however would reduce the number of places available in the area. Featherbank has access to green space which is not part of the school. The Newlaithes site has ample space for expansion and green playing areas sufficient for a school with an admissions limit of 60.

There is currently no capital funding available to develop either site however, the sale of either site would produce a capital receipt which, if it could be secured, would provide funding for the remodelling.

**3.14 Option 3: Close Broadgate Primary School or amalgamate with another school in the area.**

**3.15** The option to close Broadgate, or amalgamate with another school was based on falling rolls at the school and 29% surplus places (based on PLASC 2005). This would rationalise reception places by 50.

As Broadgate reduce their admission number to 30 in September 2007, capacity and surplus places at the school will be reduced. In addition, pupil numbers at the school have increased. Given current projections in the area there is concern that this could be too radical and would not provide any spare capacity should numbers increase as a result of new housing developments. Broadgate Primary has emerged as the favoured site for a Childrens Centre for Horsforth, utilising existing capacity within the school.

There is no obvious school to amalgamate with Broadgate. The two nearest schools, St

Mary's and St Margaret's are denominational, the latter also being a PFI school.

### **3.16 Initial Stakeholder Consultation**

**3.17** During informal consultation, two group meetings have been held with the headteachers and chairs of governors of the six primary schools, with individual meetings with each school. A meeting was also held with local Ward Councillors. The main points raised were that:

- There is a need to ensure that provision is sustainable for the future and that any changes to provision do not undermine schools that are currently healthy in terms of pupils numbers.
- Any proposal will enhance the already high standards achieved in the area
- The potential impact of any future housing developments should be considered.

### **3.18 Early Years**

**3.19** The Horsforth area is well served by early years provision mainly through private providers with the planned development of a Children's Centres in the area. Featherbank currently has no provision on site but shares the Before and After School club facilities at Newlaithes.

### **3.20 Preferred Option**

**3.21** Given the Children's Centre planned for Broadgate Primary, Education Leeds is of the view that to amalgamate Featherbank Infant School and Newlaithes Junior School on the Newlaithes site would present the best way forward for primary provision in Horsforth. This would result in a more efficient use of resources by consolidating provision onto a single site, while retaining sufficient capacity to accommodate projected demand. An amalgamation would provide continuity for pupils at both schools, while establishing a larger and more sustainable school for the future.

**3.22** An amalgamation would be achieved by the closure of the existing schools and the establishment of a new school. Consideration needs to be given to the size of the new school in the context of potential new housing developments to ensure that there are sufficient places for future demand. Based on current information it is proposed to retain the current admission number of 60.

**3.23** Bringing the two schools together would result in beneficial outcomes for pupils, as the new school would build on the strengths and the expertise of staff at the two closing schools. There would be continuity for pupils at the schools at the time of the amalgamation, all of whom would be guaranteed a place in the newly established school (although parents could preference other schools with places available). The amalgamation of an Infant and a Junior school, especially when proposing to retain the current number of pupil places, would result in minimal staff disruption. All staff would be treated equitably with posts in the school ring-fenced in the first instance to staff in the existing schools, other than the headteacher and deputy headteacher posts which could be subject to recruitment through national advert. An amalgamation of the two schools would also support community cohesion in the area.

**3.24** The Featherbank site would not be large enough to accommodate a two form entry school therefore consideration needs to be given to the expansion of the Newlaithes site to accommodate the new school. This would require considerable investment to provide a school to meet the needs of the local community and the Every Child Matters Agenda. Further work needs to be done to identify possible sources of funding.

#### **4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

4.1 Planning primary school places is relevant to a number of key priorities identified in the Children and Young People's Plan, the Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Plan, in terms of managing the supply and demand of school places and school improvement. It is also relevant to the Closing the Gap agenda, with the planning of school places taking consideration of wider socio-economic factors and regeneration.

#### **5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The review of primary provision fulfils the LEA's statutory requirement to keep under review the supply and demand of school places.

5.2 Following further work this proposal may lead to a statutory process being followed. It is Education Leeds' intention to explore opportunities for funding to develop a two-form entry school on a single site in the autumn term and to report back to the Executive Board in due course

5.3 There are no immediate financial implications

5.4 Further enquiries are being carried out as to the value of the two sites, Featherbank Infant and Newlaithes Junior.

5.5 It has already been established that the site of Featherbank infant will only sustain a 1.5 entry primary school. To develop the Newlaithes site will need approximately £1.2m of building work to improve facilities and infrastructure to support a two-form entry school.

5.6 The Education Capital Programme is unlikely to have sufficient resources to finance a new school building in Horsforth due to existing commitments. Therefore further work is required to secure funds before this proposal could proceed.

#### **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 A review of pupil places was undertaken in the Horsforth area following concerns about the extent of surplus capacity in the area. The PLASC 2006 figures showed an increase in pupils which has contributed to a reduction in surplus places across the area. In addition, there are a number of proposed housing developments in the area that could potentially generate children who would wish to attend schools in the Horsforth area.

6.2 It is acknowledged in the area that Broadgate Primary has the highest number of vulnerable children and the highest number of pupils with free school meals. The site has been identified as the favoured location for a Children's Centre for Horsforth, utilising existing accommodation. It is intended that the school will reduce its Admission limit in September 2007 from 50 to 30 places. Capacity and surplus places at this school will both therefore be reduced.

6.2 The future amalgamation of Featherbank Infant and Newlaithes Junior schools would result in a thriving and sustainable primary school which will enhance the already high standards enjoyed at both schools. Based on current information, Education Leeds will seek to explore avenues for securing capital funding to expand the Newlaithes site .

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1** To note that Education Leeds considers that an amalgamation of Featherbank Infant School and Newlaithes Junior, into a remodelled building on the junior school site to be the best option at the current time for the Horsforth area.
- 7.2** Invite Education Leeds to bring forward a proposal to this effect in due course and in particular to secure the necessary capital to deliver a single site primary school.
- 7.3** Note that, given the Children's Centre planned for Broadgate, no further action is presently required with regard to the number of primary school places available in Horsforth.