
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 14 March 2007

SUBJECT: Primary Review: Outcome of Statutory Notices for the Reorganisation Proposal in the Alwoodley Primary Planning Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Executive Board of the outcome of the statutory representation period for the reorganisation of primary provision in the Alwoodley Primary Planning Area.

2. Background

- 2.1 The report provides a summary of the single representation received in respect of the statutory notice to close Fir Tree Primary School and Archbishop Cranmer Church of England (Aided) Primary School in August 2007 and to establish a one and a half form of entry voluntary controlled primary school on the current Archbishop Cranmer site in September 2007. The lack of opposition to these proposals is strong evidence of a widespread acknowledgement that they do represent the best way forward to deliver sustainable primary school provision for the community.

3. Main issues raised as a result of Statutory Representations

- 3.1 The single representation received covers the following issues.
1. Representations will be ignored
 2. Site was chosen to maximise site sales revenue
 3. The proposal will lead to increased traffic congestion
 4. The proposed site is too close to Alwoodley Primary school
 5. The city Council has recently invested in the Fir Tree building – why?
 6. What measures have been taken to save the jobs of the teachers at Fir Tree?

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Executive Board is invited to:
- i. Consider the representations received

- ii. Agree to proceed with the proposal to close Fir Tree Primary School and Archbishop Cranmer Church of England (Aided) Primary School on 31st August 2007 and for the Church of England Diocese to establish a one and a half form of entry voluntary controlled primary school in the existing Archbishop Cranmer building on 1st September 2007.
- iii. Note that as a result of the representations the determination of the notice falls to the School Organisation Committee
- iv. Agree that the comments prepared by Education Leeds and contained in this report serve as the Local Authority's response to the representations for consideration

Agenda Item:

Originator: George Turnbull

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Electoral wards Affected:

Chapel Allerton
Moortown

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in

(details contained in the report)

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides a summary of the representations received in respect of the statutory notice to close Fir Tree Primary School and Archbishop Cranmer Church of England (Aided) Primary School in August 2007 and to establish a one and a half form of entry, voluntary controlled primary school on the current Archbishop Cranmer site in September 2007.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 13th December 2006, the Executive Board agreed the publication of a statutory notice to close Fir Tree Primary School and Archbishop Cranmer CE (Aided) Primary School on 31st August 2007 and for the Church of England Diocese to establish a one and a half form of entry voluntary controlled primary school in the current Archbishop Cranmer building on 1st September 2007.
- 2.2 The objective of the reorganisation proposal was to address the long-term viability of schools in the Alwoodley Primary Planning area, which comprises Fir Tree, Alwoodley, St Paul's Catholic (Aided), Archbishop Cranmer CE (Aided) and

Brodetsky Jewish Primary Schools. Fir Tree and Archbishop Cranmer Primary Schools have both felt the impact of low pupil numbers and have the highest surplus places in the area at 50 and 46 respectively (Pupil Level Annual School Census 2006 (PLASC)). In January 2006, there were 298 pupils in total on roll in the two schools. September 2006 figures indicate the number on roll for both schools is currently 253. There are approximately 154 surplus places across the four primary schools that make up the Alwoodley Planning Area (PLASC 2006).

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The Issue: Statutory Representations:

3.2 Opposition to the proposal

The single representation received alleges that their views, as before, will be ignored, and that the Archbishop Cranmer site was chosen so that Council could sell the Fir Tree site for housing.

3.3 Education Leeds response:

All responses received during the consultation, and now following the statutory notice period have been considered and reported back to Executive Board. They have certainly not been ignored. However, it remains the professional view of Education Leeds that the Archbishop Cranmer site, on balance, offers the greater potential to secure a sustainable primary school. Education Leeds will likely declare the Fir Tree site surplus to Education requirements. Any decision on the future of that site would in due course rest with the Council.

3.4 The proposal will lead to traffic congestion at the Archbishop Cranmer Site

3.5 Education Leeds response:

The siting of the proposed new school on the Archbishop Cranmer site was preferred precisely because it is centrally located in relation to all of the community it is intended to serve. This centrality also makes it closer to home for a majority of pupils, and therefore less likely to involve a car journey. The Fir Tree site, for all its other benefits, is sited close to the Ring Road and at the eastern end of the community a new school will serve. It is therefore slightly further to travel for most pupils and this increased distance is more likely to encourage rather than discourage car use.

3.6 The Proposed School is too close to Alwoodley Primary School

3.7 Education Leeds response:

Whilst the Archbishop Cranmer site is closer to Alwoodley Primary than the Fir Tree site. However, if the Fir Tree site had been chosen then this would have been closer to Highfield and Moortown Primary Schools. The new school on the Archbishop site is at the heart of the community it is intended to serve. Alwoodley Primary in the main serves a different community although both schools will be an option for many parents.

3.8 The City Council has recently invested in Fir Tree building – Why?

3.9 Education Leeds response:

As at most primary schools there has been regular investment into the continuing maintenance and development of the school site. Fir Tree has benefited from a considerable package of electrical works, in response to a serious health and safety

concern. It also had a large extension demolished several years ago in order to downsize the school in response to earlier declining rolls and surplus places issues. Whilst the school is in good overall condition, and benefiting the pupils who have recently and continue to attend, there remain significant building issues to be addressed. A total of £320,000 of condition related works need to be undertaken over the next five years, were the school to remain open. All schools will continue to receive investment, according to priorities, whilst they are maintained as schools. Clearly, any non-essential investment in a school subject to review would not be supported.

3.10 What measures have been taken to save the jobs of teachers at Fir Tree?

3.11 Education Leeds Response:

If the proposal proceeds all the staff at both schools will be issued with redundancy notices as a result of Archbishop Cranmer CE and Fir Tree Primary Schools closing. However, the Temporary Governing Body of the new school will establish a staffing structure for that school and all of these new posts will initially be ring-fenced to staff at the closing schools. Any staff who are not successful in securing posts through this process will be supported in finding alternative posts through the redeployment process. Experience suggests the vast majority of staff secure alternative employment with this support.

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 Financial Implications

5.2 There would be an annual revenue saving of approximately £158,000 from this amalgamation proposal.

5.3 The Fir Tree Primary School site would be declared surplus to educational requirements if this proposal proceeds. The capital receipt generated from the site, would be used to fund educational improvements, including improvements proposed on the Archbishop Cranmer Primary School site. A business case would be developed to identify how the potential costs of spending in advance of the capital receipt would be funded.

5.4 Statutory Implications

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

5.6 After full consideration of the views expressed during the Statutory Representation period, Education Leeds is of the view that this proposal should proceed. As statutory objections to the proposal have been received, the proposal falls to the School Organisation Committee for determination.

5.7 Equality Implications

5.8 This proposal is not likely to have differential impacts on the basis of ethnicity, disability or gender. The five schools in the area have different ethnic compositions, with the percentage of White British pupils ranging from 58% in Alwoodley Primary to 78% in Brodetsky Primary. The schools likely to be most impacted on by this proposal all have black and minority ethnic populations. The composition of the new school could be different from the two original schools, dependant on parental choice.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Executive Board is invited to:

- i. Consider the representations received
- ii. Agree to proceed with the proposal to close Fir Tree Primary School and Archbishop Cranmer Church of England (Aided) Primary School on 31st August 2007 and for the Church of England Diocese to establish a one and a half form of entry voluntary controlled school in the existing Archbishop Cranmer building on 1st September 2007.
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