

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 18 MARCH 2010

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

IMPROVING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES. STANLEY SCHOOL CO – LOCATION SCHEME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 23 April 2009 Cabinet gave approval, in principal, to the replacement of both Stanley and Elleray Park Special schools on new sites, each located with a mainstream primary school. This approval was further developed by Cabinet on 26 November 2009 giving their approval for formal consultation to take place on the proposal to co-locate Stanley Special School on the new Pensby Primary site.

This report gives members a full account of the consultations, which have taken place regarding this proposal, and details the progress of the design process for the co-located schools.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the report of 26 November a number of formal public consultations have been undertaken.
- 1.2 The original consultation period was set for January 6th to February 17th 2010. However because of the adverse weather in early January this was extended to February 24th.
- 1.3 A Consultation Document was distributed to all parents of the two schools involved and copies were made available to staff and members of the local community adjacent to the proposed site of co-location via local community centres and the local library. It was also forwarded to union representatives, health service and social care colleagues. Copies of the Consultation Document, in which the public and others are invited to make a written response to the proposal, are available to members in appendix 1.
- 1.4 Public meetings, advertised in the local press and by direct mailing, were held on Monday January 18th (pm) at Pensby Primary, Wednesday January 20th (am) at Stanley School and Tuesday February 2nd (evening) at Pensby Primary. All these meetings were recorded and transcripts are available to members. A 'drop-in' session was also arranged for Thursday January 21st (am) at Stanley.
- 1.5 In total the public meetings were attended by 50 people, who represented a broad spread of parents, governors and staff of the two schools and local residents, Eight written responses have been received, three telephone/email conversations and one home visit made to a resident with disabilities. There was no response to the drop-in session.
- 1.6 Generally, the response to the proposed development was positive. Pleasingly many respondents cited the benefits that will be accrued by both the pupils in Pensby Primary and Stanley School as being their reason for supporting the scheme.

- 1.7 Some concerns were, however, raised by local residents regarding anticipated problems of traffic management. This would appear to be a pre-existing problem as a number of local residents have reported concerns regarding traffic flow and inconsiderate parking relating to the present primary school. Without the advantages proposed by the co-location scheme (i.e. a one-way system through the site, with off-road parking and drop-off points), these would simply transfer from one part of the area to another (i.e. Kylemore Drive to Greenbank Road).
- 1.8 A number of respondents voiced positive opinions regarding the facilities of the two schools being made available to the local community. In particular the view was expressed that the proposed warm water/leisure pool should be made bigger (Sport England recommended size). If this were to be done then it would impact significantly on the size of the build and its cost, which would exceed the current budget.
- 1.9 There was only one response that was totally against the proposal, for unspecified reasons, and one that expressed concerns regarding the practicalities of the pupil mix intended for the new Stanley School – this is determined both by policy and the need to comply with the Disability and Discrimination Act and the SEN Improvement Test.
- 1.10 Design work for Pensby Primary school has continued throughout the Stanley consultation with detailed discussions being undertaken by the client (CYPD), architects (Technical Services Department), head-teachers and their deputies of both Pensby and Stanley schools and school governors. Due to the consultation period regarding Stanley School there have been some delays to the initial programme of work for Pensby Primary though the overall programme is anticipated to be completed on time. There has also been a need to fully explore shared facilities of the two schools, which will enhance the co-location ethos of the scheme and minimize costs.
- 1.11 The programme of work stages will be developed to phase the construction process of the primary and special school. This is in order to minimise disruption to the education of pupils from Pensby Primary school, to reduce the amount of temporary accommodation required on site and to allow construction to take place on former footprints of the existing school building, which will in turn minimise losses to green spaces and reduce building adjacencies to local residents.
- 1.12 Building Bulletin 102, which provides Local Authorities with area guidelines for the building of special schools, has produced some general concerns in terms of the increased amount of space required to deliver specialist education and support. The site at Pensby, however, has been confirmed as being large enough to consider this location, with the added bonus that developing designs show all classroom accommodation can be achieved at ground floor level. Sport England have been consulted. They have raised some concerns regarding the footprint of the building, but, to date, after providing them with more information, no further correspondence has been received.
- 1.13 Resources for this scheme are as follows:
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| Primary Capital Programme | £5,500,000 |
| Targeted Capital Fund (SEN/14-19) | £6,000,000 |
| Sale of Poulton Primary Site | £1,000,000. |
- 1.14 The scheme at this stage looks to be within the financial parameters of the resources available and further design work will help determine the overall scope of the project.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 As reported previously, significant funding is required to meet the construction and management fees of this ambitious project. However, construction costs are currently favourable and by co-locating two schools this gives the potential to share some facilities, which would ordinarily have to be provided twice.
- 2.2 Primary Capital Programme has a balance of approximately £5.0 million, which has been approved by Partnerships for Schools (PfS) for the rebuild of Pensby Primary following the closure of one school and the amalgamation of two others.
- 2.3 DCSF announced in 2008 that a one-off grant allocation of £8.0 million would be made available to Wirral for 14-19 diplomas and SEN and disabilities. Following discussions with managers for 14-19 diplomas it is proposed that £6 million of this allocation be used for the construction of Stanley Special school.

3. Staffing Implications

- 3.1 Under current proposals, in order to cater for the full range of need within the Complex Learning Difficulty definition, it is intended to increase pupil numbers at Stanley school from 80 to 100. Over time, staffing numbers will, therefore, need to be increased accordingly.

4. Equal Opportunities Implications/Health Impact Assessment

- 4.1 The new Stanley school will be designed to meet the full range of special needs experienced by children with complex learning difficulties.
- 4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached.

5. Community Safety Implications

- 5.1 As part of the planning and development process a full traffic survey will be undertaken which will then inform a traffic management plan to reduce congestion and potential risk.

6. Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 6.1 The new school will achieve BREEAM excellent standard for construction and design.

7. Planning Implications

- 7.1 Full planning permission will be required for the new schools.

8. Anti-poverty Implications

- 8.1 Pupils who are entitled to free school meals are over represented within the CLD population. Provision of additional services may provide needed assistance to both pupils and their families.

9. Social Inclusion Implications

- 9.1 Co-location of CLD schools will vastly enhance opportunities for children and young people with CLD to become fully included within the Wirral community and meets our commitment to the inclusion agenda.

10. Local Member Support Implications

- 10.1 Children and young people within CLD schools come from all wards of the Borough. Stanley and Pensby schools are both located within the Pensby/Thingwall ward.

11. Background Papers

Cabinet report 23 April 2009

Cabinet report 26 November 2009

RECOMMENDATIONS

That

(1) The DCSF 14-19/SEN Capital allocation of £6 million be approved for the construction of Stanley Special school.

(2) The building design for both Pensby and Stanley schools proceed to scheme and estimate with particular attention being given to the establishment of an efficient and safe traffic management scheme.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services