

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL**

### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### **IMPROVING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

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##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 two separate reports were presented to Cabinet regarding ways in which special school provision, primary and secondary, for pupils with complex learning difficulties on Wirral might be improved. At that meeting members gave approval for further investigations and consultation to take place. This report advises members of the outcomes of those investigations and consultations and proposes further action to improve the provision made for these pupils.

Wirral currently maintains 5 schools for with children with complex learning difficulties, three primary and two secondary. All the schools are highly regarded by parents and rated by OFSTED as either outstanding or good with outstanding features.

Nonetheless only two of the schools were purpose built originally and all have limitations in terms of their design, structure and physical environment. Early discussions with head teachers, parents and governors identified ways in which new build schools could greatly enhance the learning environment provided for pupils, increase accessibility and opportunities, where appropriate for, inclusion, improve and extend the range of curriculum and leisure opportunities and bring together the full range of services necessary for the children and their families.

During the course of the consultation process Wirral has been advised of its allocation of Building Schools for the Future monies and these, combined with funds available from the Learning and Skills Council, will enable us to build new 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, which are genuinely fit for the future and will provide up to date facilities for some of our most vulnerable pupils. Co-location of these schools on mainstream sites will facilitate greater inclusion both within education and within the wider community. They will also provide a learning pathway from childhood to adulthood by raising aspirations, expectations and opportunities whilst still providing a protective environment where necessary.

The consultation process has been lengthy and extensive and it will not stop after Cabinet's decisions. It is important that we continue to work closely with pupils, parents, schools and other stakeholders if we are genuinely to achieve our aims.

## Background

1.1 The Local Authority currently maintains 5 special schools, 3 primary and 2 secondary, for pupils who experience complex learning difficulties (CLD). These schools meet the needs of pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Such children require a highly modified and developmentally oriented curriculum rather than simple differentiated access to the national curriculum. Many of the pupils have significant additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorder, medical and physical needs and sensory disabilities.

1.2 All the schools concerned, Ellera Park, Stanley and The Lyndale at primary and Foxfield and Meadowside at secondary are considered by Ofsted to be either excellent or good with outstanding features. Nonetheless earlier consultations with parents, head teachers and governors have identified that the schools could improve the provision they make if they were provided with more up to date and purpose designed premises. .

1.3 Currently the schools provide for the following range of pupil need (pupil's primary need as identified by the schools):

	NOR	ASD	BESD	MLD	PMLD	SLCN	SLD	VI
<b>School</b>								
Ellera	79	0	0	0	12	0	67	0
Lyndale	32	0	0	1	18	0	13	0
Stanley	87	1	0	0	0	1	85	0
Foxfield	129	10	1	1	12	0	103	2
M'side	78	9	2	4	17	5	41	0

Please note

NOR – number on roll

ASD – autistic spectrum disorder

BESD – behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties

MLD – moderate-learning difficulties

PMLD – profound and multiple learning difficulties

SLCN – speech, language and communication needs

SLD – severe learning difficulties

VI – visual impairment

Members will see from the above that in any future developments we will need to provide for the needs of approximately 200 children in both the primary and secondary sectors. Despite the general fall in pupil numbers across the Wirral overall these numbers have remained fairly stable over time. Members will also be able to see the range of need for which each of our special schools for CLD provides.

## **The Consultation Process**

2.1 At the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> September members gave approval for, in the primary sector;

“A formal review of the provision the Authority makes for primary aged children who have complex learning difficulties. Such a review would be completed in March 2009 when a further report would be submitted to Cabinet”;

“This review would include a widespread consultation with all stakeholders and the assurance that any development would be an improvement on the current high quality provision”.

And in the secondary sector;

“Undertake a feasibility study exercise to identify the practical and financial implications of amalgamating Foxfield School and Meadowside School”.

“An extensive consultation exercise with pupils, parents and all other relevant stakeholders to gauge wider support for the amalgamation of Foxfield School and Meadowside School and the establishment of a single, split site, 11-19 provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties”.

“Undertake a detailed exploration with the Learning and Skills Council of the feasibility of developing a post-16 facility, which is co-located with a local college”.

2.2. The consultation process commenced in October 2008 with the publication of two documents;

“Special School Provision for Pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties - The Future of Primary CLD Provision in Wirral”, and,

“Special School Provision for Pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties – The Future of Secondary CLD Provision in Wirral”.

These documents, which contained response forms for recipients to complete, are available to members on CD along with the written records of the consultation process.

These two documents were distributed to, and views were sought from, a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, governors, teachers and other staff, health, social care, unions, transport etc. regarding a number of proposals generated from earlier discussions:

These were -

At primary;

Option 1 Rebuild all three existing schools as generic primary CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school.

Option 2 Replace the three existing schools with two newly built 100 place generic primary CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school.

Option 3 Replace the three existing schools with a single 200 place generic primary CLD school, co-located with a mainstream primary school.

Option 4 Create a single 2 – 19 school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

And at secondary;:

Combine all Wirral's provision for 11 to 19 year old pupils with CLD into a single special school, with 11 to 16 year old pupils accommodated at the Foxfield building, and the 16 to 19 year old pupils at the Meadowside Site.

At a later date to consider a newly built 11 to 16 school co-located alongside a mainstream secondary school, and to create new 16 to 19 provision co-located alongside a local Further Education College.

In addition to these options an emphasis was placed within the presentation of the options on the need and desire to incorporate enhanced medical support, extended school facilities and wrap around care into our developmental planning. These were key features raised with us, particularly by parents, in our initial discussions leading up to the formal consultation.

2.3 These options were presented at public meetings held in all 5 special schools on;

November 3<sup>rd</sup> – Meadowside School

November 4<sup>th</sup> - Foxfield School

November 18<sup>th</sup> – Stanley School

November 19<sup>th</sup> – Elleray Park School

November 20<sup>th</sup> – The Lyndale School

These meetings were all recorded and transcripts are available to members.

2.4 Drop-in sessions were held for parents or others not able to make the public meetings or those who wished to discuss their views less publicly on November 12<sup>th</sup> (secondary) and November 25<sup>th</sup> (primary).

2.5 Between late November and early December consultation meetings were held with representative groups of pupils from each of the five schools. These meetings were attended by a Child Advocate from WIRED and staff members as necessary to aid communication. Clearly these pupils were not able to respond to the formal consultation paper but their views were sought

regarding what they thought about their current school, what changes could be made to improve it and how they would feel about the developments we were proposing, especially co-location. Questions and responses are available on the CD.

2.6 A meeting was held with primary parent governors on November 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the progress of the consultation process.

2.7 A visit was arranged on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, for parents, governors and head teachers to view Newbridge School in Oldham, a new build secondary special school in Oldham.

2.8 In late December 2008, following a request from the governing body of one of the special schools, it was agreed to extend the limit of the consultation period by one month in order to gain further responses, especially those of parents.

2.9 In January 2009, visits by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were arranged to each of the 5 schools.

2.10 On January 15<sup>th</sup> 2009 a meeting was held with members of Foxfield and Meadowside School's PTA.

2.11 On February 9<sup>th</sup> and February 24<sup>th</sup> meetings were held with the CLD Consultation Group, a representative group of parents, who were in the majority, governors and head teachers in order to consider the broad outcomes of the consultation process, how the original proposals had been modified/adapted and to gain a broad agreement as to how to progress the improvement of special education provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties on the Wirral.

2.12 Also during the consultation process we have been in conversation with and/or have received feedback from a number of other key stakeholders e.g. health, social care, Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and colleagues in the FE sector. All are keen to work with us in our developments and the LSC and Wirral Metropolitan College in particular see great advantages to be gained by co-location of the 16-19 provision, which could provide a learning pathway into FE not only for our CLD pupils but also those placed in mainstream, Clare Mount and West Kirby Residential School. This could reduce our current reliance on independent specialist FE colleges in anticipation of the Local Authority taking over the LSC budget for this.

## **Response to the Consultation Process**

### **3.1 Attendance at Public Meetings**

	Parents	Staff	Governors	Others	Total
Meadowside meeting 03.11.08	16	20	7	3	46
Foxfield meeting 04.11.08	12	13	11	4	40
Stanley meeting 18.11.08					

	14	40	7	2	63
Elleray Park meeting 19.11.08	23	30	2	6	61
The Lyndale meeting 20.11.08	16	23	7	3	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>259</b>

NB Some people, parents, staff and governors attended more than one meeting.

20 people attended the drop in sessions, mainly parents but also one or two staff.

### 3.2 Submission of Written Responses

Individual responses to the consultation have been received from;

- 16 parents of secondary age children
- 7 parents of primary age children
- 16 members of staff
- 3 governors

Collective responses have been received from staff, parent and governor groups from each of the five schools including the Friends of Foxfield School and the Meadowside Parents Action Group.

Responses have been received from the following other stakeholders; Social Care, Children with Disabilities Team, Wirral PCT, Wirral Transport Services, Wirral Metropolitan College, Unison, NAHT and Connexions

## **Outcomes of the Consultation Process**

### Analysis of the Public Meeting Records and Individual Responses

N.B. The proposal for the creation of a 2-19 school for children and multiple learning difficulties proposed by the parents, staff and governors at The Lyndale School and supported by them throughout the consultation process, has received little comment or support from other members of the CLD community. This does not mean that the proposal is without merit but members need to be advised that the following analysis and report is based largely on comments received from those associated with the other four schools. Members have available to them on CD the details and rationale of the proposal submitted by The Lyndale School.

4.1 During the course of the consultation process the context, particularly in regard to potential sources of funding for any new developments, has changed. Wirral has been advised of its Primary Building Schools for the Future (BSF) monies over the next 15 years and also has had confirmed its initial allocation of BSF monies for secondary provision. Discussions have progressed regarding accessing LSC funding for the proposed 16-19 provision. Thus far this latter proposal has been received favourably as, if we do progress with co-location with WMC, on a site adjacent to a proposed new Chester University campus then this will greatly enhance the learning

opportunities of all the students involved. These changes have impacted upon the consultation process.

4.2 The outcomes of the consultation process are not amenable to a numerical or statistical analysis. Rather there is a need to look at the themes raised, both positive and critical and how these might be incorporated into modifications of the original proposals. Members will also note that the responses we have received, particularly from parents, are only representative of the views of approximately 25% of the numbers possible. It was with this in mind that we took our initial analysis of the outcomes of the consultation back to our CLD Consultation Group (meetings on February 9<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>), which includes a broad representation of parents, governors and staff, prior to compiling this report.

4.3 Beginning with the most important groups of stakeholders – parents and pupils – the general views were as follows;

4.4 The vast majority of parents are extremely satisfied with the education that their children are currently receiving and are concerned that whatever developments do take place do not disrupt their children in the short term and will provide positive benefits in the longer term. They were, however, keen for their children to gain from any potential benefits from investment in ways similar to mainstream school pupils:

Reference to academy schools – “I bet the government will give them X amount of millions of pounds and I hope the same goes for special schools as our children are incredibly vulnerable and trustworthy and we all know the real world is not like this it can be very cruel, so our children need the best that money can provide including, nurses, teachers, speech therapists social workers all the help these children need, as the government cannot ignore our children’s needs. MAKE DO won’t wash anymore”

4.5 In the secondary sector there was little, if any, support for an early merger of Foxfield and Meadowside Schools in the manner proposed. Whilst the benefits of a single 11-19, new build, split site school could be seen, there was considerable concern expressed regarding the disruption that pupils would experience during the transition process. Their view was that if this was the direction in which we would move then we should build the new provision first and then plan for the pupils to move in. The drivers for this proposal, particularly the need to provide enhanced provision to deliver the 14-19 curriculum and the schedule of BSF monies originally not being available until 2015 have been ameliorated by a change in central government policy allowing us to receive BSF monies earlier.

4.6 Parents also expressed the view that there would be a reduction in choice if we were to move to a single 11-19 school. They feel that currently each school has its own particular ethos and caters for different pupils needs. There was a concern that this may be lost in a single school option but benefits could be seen by the new the new build being purpose built to cater for the full range of needs.

4.7 Parents also expressed concern regarding the perceived inadequacies of 19-25 provision for their children and queried why this was not part of the consultation process. Whilst this is currently outside of our remit we are working closely with both Wirral Metropolitan College and the Learning and Skills Council, who provide/fund such provision in order to address this issue. Indeed this has been one of the major reasons behind the proposal to co-locate the proposed 16-19 provision with the college. In September 2010 the LSC budget for FE provision will transfer to Wirral Council and this will facilitate joint planning even further.

4.8 Parents were also keen that whatever proposals were decided upon would incorporate the wide range of additional and extended services that we envisage.

4.9 The views of pupils were quite mixed. Again they all enjoyed going to school particularly as they felt safe and supported but felt that the facilities on offer could be improved. Some pupils could see benefits in extended school activities others would prefer to go home and be with their families. Understandably some pupils felt concerned regarding any major changes, especially co-location, others were positive about the idea. Again there were mixed views about the proposal for a 16-19 6th form. Pupils were unanimous that any changes should await the new builds being available.

4.10 In the primary sector parents were again very supportive of the education their children receive at their current schools and, therefore, anxious that any changes will build upon and improve current provision. Of the options presented there was little support for the single school of 200 pupils and a tendency to opt for a rebuild of all three schools. There was, however, a recognition of the practical and financial constraints of this option and a move towards favouring the option of building two new CLD schools, each accommodating approximately 100 children was observed during the consultation process.

4.11 Parents were very supportive of the inclusion within the planning and development process of the provision of extended and additional services and, in particular, the co-location on one of the school sites of a new purpose built Child Development Centre. This option, which has been discussed at the highest level within Wirral PCT was brought to the meetings by a senior member of the PCT, who attended two of the three of the primary consultation meetings. This option is being pursued with the PCT.

4.12 The view has been raised, by some parents, that the proposals may lead to a potential reduction in choice of schools. Also the issue of co-location has raised some concern. This latter concern was partly due to a misunderstanding of the purpose of co-location i.e. that it would mean all children being integrated into the mainstream school, partly due to worries that if facilities were shared then the children with CLD may not have their needs fully met and partly due a concern that co-location would lead to a level of 'busyness' and potential noise which would not be in the children's interests. Should members agree to progress with the recommendations then these issues will be addressed in the next phase of the planning process.

4.13 The vast majority of primary aged children consulted stated that they enjoyed coming to school. Similarly to the secondary aged children some children liked the idea of extended school activities before and after school, others would prefer to be at home with their families. Most pupils were in favour of co-location and the majority who expressed a view felt that the schools should include all pupils and transferring to a big school at secondary age would be a good idea.

4.14 Individual responses from staff at the five schools divided into concerns regarding the provision being proposed for the pupils and, quite understandably, how the proposals may impact upon them as employees.

4.15 In answer to the latter of these two points it is important to note that no reduction in the overall number of places for children and young people is being proposed, indeed there may be an increase post 16. Whilst there may be some efficiency savings by a reduction in the number of schools we will still require a similar number of staff to teach, support and care for the pupils. Staff had particular concerns regarding the need, under some of the proposals, for some schools to close and for new ones to open. Staff, have been issued with a resume of Wirral's policies and procedures, which apply in such circumstances, and an initial meeting has been held with their Union Representatives. We will continue to work closely with all staff and their representatives in implementing any future proposals or recommendations.

4.16 In considering the proposals from a professional standpoint staff largely represent the view of a governor expressed at one of the public meetings ;

**“that these are very good schools, operating in very inadequate buildings and it's the skills of the staff of those schools that have made them appear adequate”.**

Staff recognise the limitations of the buildings within which they work and the limitations this can place upon the educational opportunities they are able to provide for their pupils. They are broadly supportive of the proposed changes and the improvements it may offer – enhanced facilities for curriculum delivery, opportunities for greater inclusion, opportunities for enhanced service provision – and feel that the change process should be led by the needs of the children and should involve the whole CLD community. As a consequence of being needs led staff are not supportive of changes, which may lead to disruption and/or unnecessary stress for the pupils.

4.17 Of the three governors who made individual responses one made comments regarding the need to plan carefully as to how we meet the wide range of pupil need envisaged within generic CLD schools, the need to improve 16-19 vocational opportunities and the need for careful planning regarding 16-19 provision. The other two made detailed comments regarding the range of provision we may consider and/or details regarding the next stage of the planning process. These responses, which are not easily summarised, have been incorporated into the consultation process and are available to members.

## **Analysis of Collective Responses**

5.1 These responses were received approximately one month later than the above following the agreement to extend the consultation period to allow further discussion between parents, staff and governors. This obviously allowed all those involved to consider the issues involved in greater depth. It also allowed for a degree of consensus to emerge.

5.2 At primary level it was agreed that the preferred option was for the build of two new and purpose built, generic primary CLD schools, each co-located and each meeting the full range of need within the CLD sector.

5.3 At secondary level it was agreed that the preferred option was to build a new 11-19 secondary CLD school but with split sites, 11-16 and 16-19, each catering for the full range of need within the CLD sector. The 11-16 site would be co-located with a mainstream secondary school and the 16-19 site co-located with a local FE College.

5.4 There were a number of caveats associated with these agreements, e.g. that the design and build of the proposed new schools should fully take into account the range of needs of the pupils for which they are to provide, that the environment within which they are set is appropriate to these needs, that the potential benefits of co-location are fully realised and the potential disadvantages minimised and that other partners (especially health and social care) are fully involved so as to provide the range of provision needed by the pupils and their families. All of these comments will be incorporated into the design and construction phase if these projects are approved. Also some concerns were expressed regarding the co-location of all the proposed new build provision and whether consideration should be given to some being co-located and some not.

5.5 Some concerns have been raised by a group of parents at Meadowside School regarding the appropriateness of a potential site identified for the co-location of the 16-19 provision. These concerns relate largely to health and safety issues and we have offered to meet with these parents to assure them that no decisions will be made, which compromise the health and safety of the pupils concerned.

5.6 The responses from other stakeholders are both supportive and favourable. All are in favour of our providing the best possible facilities and resources for Wirral's pupils with CLD, and the concept of 21<sup>st</sup> Century School was raised specifically by the NAHT. Social Care are particular keen, along with health to work jointly to provide co-located services, which meet the aspirations of The Aiming Higher agenda. The Learning and Skills Council and Wirral Metropolitan College are particularly interested in our proposals for co-locating our 16-19 provision with a local FE College as they have identified significant benefits this would have in smoothing the developmental pathway for our children and young people from childhood to adulthood.

5.7 Regarding the proposed 16-19 provision, co-located with a local FE College, a potential site has been identified alongside the proposed new rebuild of Wirral Metropolitan College and adjacent to a proposed new

campus for Chester University. If this site were to be deemed suitable and funding was secured this would provide a unique opportunity for young people with CLD and others with disabilities to become an integral part of a thriving learning community. We are currently investigating the appropriateness of this site with colleagues from Technical Services.

## **Agreeing a Way Forward**

6.1 In order to seek a way forward, which would find a broad agreement amongst our stakeholders, a workshop was organised with our CLD Consultation Group at which we presented feedback from the consultation process thus far and also information regarding potential sources of funding for the projects proposed. Participants were then able to discuss and advise upon a range of proposals, which had emerged from the consultation process. These included those noted in 5 above, variations on the concept of co-location, the establishment of a 2-19 school for PMLD and ways in which this might be included within other proposals.

6.2 This workshop extended over two sessions and resulted in an agreement to pursue the;

“Creation of a generic 11-19 CLD secondary school, with the 11-16 provision co-located with a mainstream secondary school and the split site 6<sup>th</sup> form, co-located with an FE College, with each having the facilities and resources to meet the full range of needs experienced by pupils with complex learning difficulties”.

This school, on separate sites, would be under single management and governance.

“Creation of two, generic CLD primary schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school, with both schools having the facilities and resources to meet the full range of need experienced by pupils with complex learning difficulties”.

A rider was added whereby, where appropriate, pupils attending these schools would be offered the opportunity to integrate into their own local school.

6.2 No decision was reached as to whether we should progress with the development of a 2-19 school for children with pmlD as it was felt further investigation was required as to the demand for such a school, which pupils it would provide for, and its potential viability. The numbers proposed for such a provision i.e. 45 or approximately 7/8 per key stage does not significantly impact upon the other proposals being made.

## **The SEN Improvement Test**

7.1 From the outcomes of the consultation process we have achieved a mandate for developments, which should improve the provision we make for

children and young people who experience complex learning difficulties. In order to demonstrate this improvement the government requires that we 'test' our proposals against the following criteria;

improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment, with reference to the LA's Accessibility Strategy

improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services

improved access to suitable accommodation

improved supply of suitable places

7.2 The proposals being put forward would meet these criteria as follows;

Building new schools, following the guidelines contained within DCSF Building Bulletin 102 – "Designing for disabled children and children with special educational needs", which from the start will consider the full range of needs of the children for whom they are providing and also the range of teaching resources, environments and technologies which will enable maximum curriculum access and progression.

The new build schools will allow access to all children with CLD, irrespective of their additional and individual needs and provide a completely inclusive environment both internally and externally. Co-location will provide opportunities for social and academic integration and inclusion as appropriate for each of the children and young people. In particular, at the 14-19 level this will allow a much smoother transition for our young people from childhood to adulthood through a process of person centred planning and "Learning for Life".

Building Bulletin 102 not only concerns itself with the educational provision and the broader learning environment but also with the need to incorporate the accommodation needs of the various resident and visiting professional staff e.g. doctors, physiotherapists, occupational and speech therapists, psychologists, members of social care, who are crucial to meeting the full range of pupil need in an holistic way.

By working closely with partners in health, social care and extended schools we will further be able to bring the full range of additional services to the children and young people. These could include; provision of a co-located Child Development Centre, provision of short break and/or independence training facilities, extended services both during term time and school holidays.

The accommodation provided would not only meet the full range of identified pupil need but also provide a valuable community resource especially for children and adults with disabilities.

Whilst we are proposing to reduce the overall number of special schools for pupils with CLD from five to three all will be accessible to all pupils and will be designed to meet all their needs. Currently this is not the case and this can impact upon the availability of places and parental choice. The actual capacity of each of the provisions will be based upon a detailed examination of current and historical rates of incidence of CLD and predictions for the future in order to provide a sufficient number of places to meet need.

## **Next Steps**

8.1 If Cabinet gives approval to the recommendations of this report then the following actions will be necessary.

8.2 Potential sites will need to be identified for the two new build primary CLD schools, both co-located, plans drawn up, submitted and approved. As part of this process discussions will need to continue with the PCT regarding the co-location of a new Child Development Centre and also with Children's Social Care staff regarding potential provision of facilities for short breaks. Again plans will need to be drawn up, submitted and approved.

8.3 A potential site will need to be identified for the new build 11-16 CLD site, plans drawn up submitted and approved. Discussion will need to continue with Children's Social Care Staff regarding provision for short breaks. Again plans will need to be drawn up, submitted and approved.

8.4 The potential site, already identified, for the proposed new 16-19 provision will need to be further investigated and plans drawn up, submitted and approved. Discussions will need to continue with Children's/Adult Social Care regarding potential provision for short breaks and independence training. Discussions will need to continue with LSC and WMC regarding potential funding and achieving a working relationship which is both beneficial to 16-19 students and 19-25 students.

8.5 Further investigations are still required regarding the proposed provision of co-located 2-19 provision specifically for pupils with pmlD.

## **Financial Implications**

9.1 Funding for the primary CLD schools is available through both the primary BSF funding stream and the primary capital budget.

9.2 Funding for the secondary 11-16 CLD school is available through the secondary BSF funding stream.

9.3 Funding for the 16-19 CLD 6<sup>th</sup> form provision will be subject to application to and approval from the LSC.

## **Staffing Implications**

10.1 It is not anticipated that there will be any reduction in the number of pupil places offered under these proposals, indeed at the 16-19 provision they may

increase in order to provide a stepping stone for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are not currently within the CLD cohort. However, with the overall reduction in the numbers of special educational schools for children and young people with CLD there may be reductions in staffing numbers in some areas. These will be identified in the next phase.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

11.1 If the changes proposed are accepted the vast majority of pupils with CLD will be able to access and have their needs met in all of the new facilities. This should lead to a reduction in the number of pupils who need to be placed in special schools or colleges outside of Wirral.

### **Community Safety Implications**

12.1 There are none arising from this report

### **Local Agenda 21 Implications**

13.1 There are none arising from this report.

### **Planning implications**

14.1 Any proposed new builds would be subject to full planning application and approval.

### **Anti-poverty Implications**

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

### **Social Inclusion Implications**

16.1 Currently, of the five CLD schools only Stanley School is co-located. Whilst all of the other four have developed integration programmes these are all hampered by logistical problems. Co-location of all our CLD sites will vastly enhance the opportunities for our children and young people with CLD to become fully included within the Wirral community and meet our commitment to the inclusion agenda.

### **Local Member Support Implications**

17.1 Children and young people within our CLD schools come from all wards of the borough.

### **Background Papers**

18.1 These include;

Previous reports to Cabinet on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2008  
The following are all on the CD distributed to members.  
Copies of consultation documents  
Transcripts of public meetings  
Copies of consultation returns  
Copies of papers taken to the CLD Consultation Group in February 2009

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That

(1) Approval is given in principal to either:

(a) the replacement of the current three primary CLD schools by the development of two, new build, primary (2-11) CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school and each providing for approximately 100 children and catering for the full range of need found within the CLD population, or;

(b) the replacement of Stanley and Elleray Park schools by the development of two new build, primary (2-11) CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school and each providing for approximately 100 children and catering for the full range of need found within the CLD population and,

to continue investigations and consultations regarding the development of a 2-19 CLD provision specifically for children who experience profound and multiple learning difficulties and who, by reasons of medical/physical difficulties, may be considered particularly vulnerable. Under this proposal The Lyndale School will continue as presently until these investigations and consultations are completed and further reports to Cabinet are considered.

(2) Approval is given to the development of new build, secondary (11-19), CLD school, catering for the full range of needs found within the CLD population, on split sites.

The 11-16 provision, approximately 135 places, would be co-located with a mainstream secondary school.

The 16-19 premises, approximately 120 places to allow for additional provision to cater for those pupils currently educated within mainstream or other special schools e.g. Clare Mount or West Kirby Residential School and who may require a stepping stone to Further/Higher Education would be co-located with a local FE College (WMC).

(3) Approval is given to continuing consultations with other stakeholders regarding funding of the above and the provision of additional extended services.

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## **Appendix**

### **Summary of the major points made during the consultation process.**

#### **Pupil Consultation – Primary**

Primary pupils expressed the following opinions;

- The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, being with their friends, being able to go swimming and do their work;
- They liked the idea of being able to additional activities outside and expressed preferences for playing with toys and dolls and other games;
- They liked the opportunity for before and after school clubs and also the choice to be at home;
- There were mixed views on the idea of going to bigger schools but agreements on the need for quiet areas;
- If schools were to be bigger children would like bigger classrooms, more room to play and a “massive garden”;
- On 11+ transfer views were mixed;
- Pupils appeared to feel that the idea of generic CLD schools is generally a good one.

#### **Pupil Consultation – Secondary**

At secondary level pupils expressed the following opinions;

- All pupils enjoy coming to school and the best things about it are friends, the swimming pool, art and the fact there are no bullies and everybody helps you;
- A whole range of preferred additional activities were mentioned with some pupils wishing to take these up outside normal school hours and some not;
- Pupils expressed a range of concerns regarding possible changes e.g. co-location, amalgamation of schools (especially as an interim measure) and possible reduction in choice. Pupils would like for the new school to be built moving;
- Pupils were positive about the idea of a separate 6<sup>th</sup> but differed about where it should be located i.e. next to a school or next to a college. They did agree that it should be different to a school;
- Pupils also agreed that any new school would need more space, bigger classrooms and “a roof that doesn’t leak”.

## **Comments made at drop in sessions**

### **Secondary**

- Need to continue with small class sizes;
- Should avoid the disruption that would come from the interim proposal and move into new build;
- Need a clearer picture on what's on offer and the funding to pay for it;
- Concern re: implications for staff employment, need for continuity of staff;
- Concern re: potential of some children being in the same school for 17 years (2-19 proposal);
- Concern re: potential reduction in choice;
- Things can't stay the same – we need change for the better;
- Understand the idea of college opportunities and see the benefits – the idea of a 6<sup>th</sup> form at 12 Quays is a good one;
- Need to expand what's on offer at Conway Park;
- Positive re: inclusion opportunities available through co-location, though it needs to be managed carefully;
- Positive about possibilities of extended services.

### **Primary**

- Very positive re: the benefits of co-location – “a wonderful idea”;
- Would class sizes be maintained?
- Need to keep the current ethos and culture;
- Need to improve respite and extended services.

### **Group Responses – including parents, governors and staff**

- Things work well at the moment but the limitations of the current buildings are recognised;
- Three new schools would be ideal but recognize that this would be unfeasible, therefore, two new schools would be the preferred option;

- Transition is an important part of children's lives. If we have 2-19 for pmlD then why not for ASD etc;
- There appears to be no educational reason why current secondary provision is not appropriate for pupils with pmlD;
- Any new build schools would have to maintain the opportunities for inclusive partnerships with mainstream schools.

## **Individual Responses**

### **Secondary – Parents**

- Concern regarding the original proposals of amalgamation of Foxfield and Meadowside Schools prior to any new build and the disruptive effect this would have upon the children;
- Need for a continuation of the independent living provision;
- Need to ensure that any changes bring about improvement;
- New build is a good idea but leave the schools as they are until then;
- Class sizes and provision should continue;
- Provision for post 19 is more important;
- A single school will remove choice;
- Some concern re: co-location – possible ridicule and bullying;
- Concern re: pmlD provision at secondary level;
- “I bet the government will give them (Academy Schools) X amount of millions of pounds and I hope the same goes for special schools as our children are incredibly vulnerable and trustworthy and we all know the real world is not like this it can be very cruel, so our children need the best that money can provide including, nurses, teachers, speech therapists social workers all the help these children need, as the government cannot ignore our children's needs. MAKE DO won't wash anymore”;
- Need for a more holistic planning approach for 2½ - 19, which involves parents as part of the process and in the depth and the detail.

### **Staff**

- Prospect of new built premises exciting, early merger not so;
- Need for the 16-19 provision to be a school and staffed and managed accordingly.

## **Primary - Parents**

- Object to an early merger of Foxfield and Meadowside – new build makes more sense;
- The reason the CLD schools work so well is that they are small and family oriented. I am not convinced that CLD children should be included into mainstream school. Creating a school for 2-19 year olds is most inappropriate;
- I would agree with Option2 – creation of 2 generic primary CLD schools both co-located;
- Any decisions must be governed by the needs of the children and not based upon cost;
- Am fully supporting Lyndale school becoming 2-19.