

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CORE SERVICES) AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (PEOPLE)

SPECIALIST EDUCATION PROVISION: SATELLITE FACILITY (ARDSLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain approval for the proposed use of Ardsley Community Centre as a satellite facility for pupils with special educational or complex needs, at Key Stages 1 and 2, who have been placed at Greenacre Special Academy and to enter into a lease agreement to enable exclusive use of the Community Centre by Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust for this purpose.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Executive Director (People) be authorised to agree the principle of granting a 7-year lease of the Ardsley Community Centre to the Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust to allow use of the building as a satellite facility for Greenacre Special Academy.
- 2.2 That the Corporate Asset Manager on behalf of the Executive Director (Core Services) be authorised to prepare and finalise the detailed Heads of Terms for the proposed 7-year lease to the Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust.
- 2.3 The financial implications arising from this report be included in the Capital Programme and released in accordance with the Financial Regulations Code of Practice C5.2(a)

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Barnsley Placement and Sufficiency Strategy for children with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND) sets out the challenge facing the local authority and schools partners in meeting our placement needs, both now and into the future.
- 3.2 There exists a particular pressure in meeting the needs of pupils requiring special school placements due to the lack of capacity locally. In addition, there is an identified need to provide suitable placements for those pupils who require specialist support to meet their learning needs but not to the same extent as those requiring all the specialist facilities of the Greenacre Academy main site. In addition, the SEND Code of Practice (2015) requires the Local Authority to have in place provision to ensure that, wherever possible, the needs of pupils with SEND can be met in a mainstream school environment.
- 3.3 For this reason, 'satellite' provision was established a number of years ago to allow pupils to receive appropriate specialist support within a mainstream school

environment. Currently, there are two KS1 / 2 satellite sites located at Kexborough Primary and Hoyland Springwood Primary. Both schools belong to the Every Child Matters Academy Trust (ECM). Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust (sponsors of Greenacre Academy) currently has a long-term agreement with ECM to continue to provide the satellite at Kexborough. However, no such agreement is possible at Hoyland Springwood due to restrictions on space and current fitness for purpose of the existing satellite to meet the increasing demand highlighted in the Sufficiency Strategy. Furthermore, ECM has indicated an unwillingness to enter into a longer term agreement as a result of developments they would like to make to the school site.

- 3.4 This has had the effect of restricting numbers able to be placed at the Hoyland Springwood satellite, with pupils otherwise suitable to be placed in satellite provision having to attend Greenacre main site, resulting in restrictions on the availability of places there for pupils with more complex needs. This displacing effect has thereby increased demand for more expensive, out of borough placements. In order to avert this, commissioners of school placements have therefore been exploring the availability and feasibility of alternatives to the use of Hoyland Springwood.
- 3.5 Ardsley Community Centre is currently managed through the Adult Learning Service in Place Directorate. The building is no longer utilised by the Service for related employment skills/activities provision and due to the costs of running the building, this is unsustainable and, as such, the service is prepared to rescind management of the building in the summer term.
- 3.6 There are currently three occupants who will require 4 weeks-notice to vacate the building. One is a dancing school which holds a licence to occupy and who will be supported as far as possible in their search for alternative venues by the Council. In addition, the YMCA utilises the building on a licence to occupy basis. Furthermore a mother and toddler group also uses the building on a room hire basis but there have been questions as to its sustainability, due to dwindling numbers. If necessary, colleagues will work with this group to help find alternative arrangements.
- 3.7 Therefore, Ardsley Community Centre offers a potential solution to the issue of replacing Hoyland Springwood satellite provision. It is located within the campus of Oakhill Primary Academy, itself part of the Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust. In addition, it is accessible for pupils with restricted mobility and with appropriate capital investment will offer a much more long-term solution. In addition, this proposal would allow for commissioning of additional places, should they be required in future years thereby increasing flexibility within the current school system for SEND pupils, in line with our SEND Placement and Sufficiency Strategy.

4.0 PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

- 4.1 The proposal is to transfer use of Ardsley Community Centre to Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust, for use as satellite provision for KS1&2 Greenacre pupils. The transfer of use will be arranged via a lease arrangement, likely to be for a 7 year period subject to the outcome of negotiations with Wellspring.

4.2 In identifying this potential solution, BMBC has negotiated with Wellspring to place 6 further pupils to Greenacre for September 2018. These placement offers are contingent on the Local Authority identifying a suitable alternative to Hoyland Springwood satellite. Should an alternative not be found, Greenacre have been clear that they will not offer the places to these pupils thereby exacerbating our issues around capacity locally and, in all likelihood, prompting the Local Authority to seek further expensive, out of borough provision. This would not be in the best interests of the pupils concerned or their families.

4.3 Ardsley Community Centre is a building which appears to be in reasonably good condition. It offers the scope to improve satellite provision and the flexibility to develop the offer over time, as needs demand and in line with the SEND Placement and Sufficiency Strategy. Use of the building also offers significant scope to avoid the need to ask pupils to travel outside of Barnsley for their education, thereby realising potentially substantial cost avoidance.

5.0 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

5.1 There are no suitable alternatives identified. Commissioners are continuing to explore the potential for other sites to be used for satellite provision but alternatives would not be available for September 2018 admissions.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS

6.1 Ardsley Community Centre is used regularly by three existing community groups all of whom will be supported by the Local Authority as far as possible in their search for alternative venues. The Community Centre, under this proposal, would transfer to the exclusive use of Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust for education provision to higher needs pupils thereby rendering the centre unavailable for broader community use and the existing users will have to be served with notices to quit.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The proposal to transfer (under a lease arrangement) Ardsley Community Centre to Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust will result in additional capital costs to the Authority to make the centre fit for purpose i.e. up to standard for use as a school. A provisional schedule of costs that totals £105k has been received from Wellspring Trust which outlines expected costs for refurbishment and alteration; IT infrastructure and connectivity and furniture, fittings and equipment. The schedule of costs will be reviewed by the Council's Asset Management Service and agreed up-front with Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust before the commencement of any work.

7.2 The above estimated capital cost will be funded from the capital grant funding allocated to the Council under the DfE SEND Special Provision Fund. The Council has been allocated £260k in 2018/19 (£760k over 3 years) to fund additional SEN places and improve facilities and provision for pupils with SEND.

7.3 The lease arrangements and any associated costs to Wellspring will be negotiated by commissioners, in line with normal practice. At this stage however, a 7 year fixed-term lease on a 'peppercorn' rate would be the preferred option.

8.0 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None for BMBC.

9.0 COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

9.1 If approval is received then communication of the plan will begin with parents and carers of affected pupils, the pupils themselves and the broader schools community through Schools Forum.

10.0 CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The SEND Sufficiency Strategy has undergone broad and extensive consultation. This proposal has been developed through consultation with colleagues in the Asset Management Section of the Corporate Core Directorate and senior staff in the Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust. No members of the public have been consulted on the details of this specific proposal.

10.2 Local Ward Members are aware of and support the proposal.

11.0 THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

11.1 The objectives of this proposal support the Corporate Plan priority of enabling people to achieve their potential and ensuring every child attends a good school.

12.0 PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

12.1 Ensuring pupils with SEND can attend local provision, in Barnsley, will help to promote inclusion and further progress the ambitions of our SEND Strategy to allow pupils with SEND to be educated in mainstream settings wherever possible.

13.0 TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

13.1 Ensuring SEND pupils can achieve to the highest possible standard will help in improving their potential to acquire the skills necessary to access the employment market and become an active part in a growing local/City Region economy.

14.0 TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

14.1 SEND pupils educated locally are more likely to remain supported by local health and other services to aid their physical and emotional development.

15.0 REDUCTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER

15.1 It should be noted that in meeting the specific or complex needs of vulnerable children and young people at risk of harm, abuse or exploitation, the support afforded to them will help in safeguarding these children and minimise any

vulnerability to adopting risky behaviour(s).

16.0 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

16.1

Risk Description	Mitigation Activity
Existing building-users are unable to find suitable alternatives	Colleagues are actively seeking alternatives and will discuss with building users as soon as possible if proposal approved. If alternative accommodation cannot be identified then the current user's occupation of the Community Centre will have to be brought to an end by serving the relevant notices.
Negative community reaction to transfer of building	Clear communication, building currently under-used by community groups, addressing specific needs of community for vulnerable children and families

17.0 COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

17.1 The objectives of this proposal are compatible with the Articles and Protocols of the Convention and would support the promotion of a child's right to an education

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

Report author: Richard Lynch,
Head of Service Commissioning, Governance & Partnerships

Financial Implications / Consultation

.....

(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer where no financial implications)