

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 8 October 2013

Improving Support for Children and Young People in Need in Edinburgh - Consultation on a Proposal to Close Wellington Special School in Midlothian.

Item number	7.3
Report number	
Wards	All

Links

Coalition pledges	P1 , P4 , P5 , P7 , P29
Council outcomes	CO2 , CO3 , CO5 , CO6
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

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Executive summary

Improving Support for Children and Young People in Need in Edinburgh - Consultation on a Proposal to Close Wellington Special School in Midlothian.

Summary

It is a Council priority to reduce the use of out of authority residential provision and to provide best value services in Edinburgh. Wellington Special School is a City of Edinburgh establishment located in Midlothian which provides services in a remote location at high cost to a small group of young people. This report recommends that the Council commences a consultation process on a proposal to close Wellington Special School and replace the services currently provided there with enhanced services in the city of Edinburgh.

Recommendations

To recommend that the Education, Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve that the statutory consultation is carried on the proposed closure of education services at Wellington Special School with a view to ending care and education services at Wellington by 30 June 2014 as set out in this report;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to develop a detailed consultation paper on the basis of the proposals outlined in this report;
3. Approve that the statutory consultation should commence in November 2013;
4. Note that it is the intention to return to a future meeting of the Full Council for a decision on the proposal;
5. Note that the proposal will require Scottish Ministers approval prior to implementation should the Council decide to proceed;
6. Note the intention to request consent from the Council to ring fence some or all of any capital receipts for future education and care provision within the city of Edinburgh.
7. Approve the proposals for the development of additional pupil support services in the city of Edinburgh.

Measures of success

The education and care needs of more children and young people are met within the city of Edinburgh. Educational outcomes for children with additional needs are improved.

Financial impact

The current annual cost of services at Wellington is £2.252m. At full capacity this would equate to a residential cost per place of £155,000 a year and education costs per day place of £30,000 a year. At current occupancy levels the cost per day school place is £65,000 a year per head and the cost of a residential placement is £190,000 per child.

It is proposed the Council re-invests significant resources in strengthening support for pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties in Edinburgh through:

- an additional 12 places at Gorgie Mills Special School - £500,000
- additional resources in mainstream secondary schools to meet the needs of pupils within the school - £600,000.

These proposals offer best use of resources through targeted reinvestment to improve services for children and young people in need whilst also achieving direct economies of approximately £1.126m a year.

Repairs and maintenance pressures at Wellington Special School of £1,235,892 over the next 5 years will be avoided.

Sustainability impact

There are positive impacts on the environment arising from this proposal. The reduction of significant daily transport demands to the school and the subsequent reduction in fuel consumption would have a beneficial environmental impact and the six buildings at Wellington will no longer require maintenance and heating.

Equalities impact

Wellington Special School provides care and education for young men. The impact on equalities will be positive as enhanced support alternatives will be available to both sexes. Young people will have their needs met locally within Edinburgh. If the recommendations are accepted a full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken.

Consultation and engagement

A consultation process which must be followed regarding the proposed closure of a special school, like other schools, is prescribed in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. A full consultation paper will be developed in advance of the consultation process based on the proposals set out in this report. The Committee is asked to delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to develop this paper.

Background reading / external references

[Wellington HMle Inspection Report – August 2010](#)

[Wellington Care Inspectorate Report – June 2013](#)

[Curriculum for Excellence – the Senior Phase A Statement from the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board.](#)

Improving Support for Children and Young People in Need in Edinburgh - Consultation on a Proposal to Close Wellington Special School in Midlothian.

1. Background

- 1.1 It is a priority for the Council to provide high quality care and learning for young people wherever possible in their own communities and within the city of Edinburgh. During the recent Inspection of Children's Services in Edinburgh the Care Inspectorate found that *"tackling inequalities and promoting inclusive services are clearly articulated as being central to achieving the vision for children"*. Inspectors identified the *"strong commitment from leaders about improving the lives of looked after children and embedding the responsibilities of the corporate parent across the Council and its partners"* as key strengths.
- 1.2 Wellington is a special school which currently provides education to 23 boys, 6 of whom stay overnight at the school's residential unit. The school is located in Midlothian, to the south of Penicuik on the road to Peebles. It has its origins as a 19th century reformatory and was designated to Edinburgh at the time of local government reorganisation in 1996. It provides services to boys aged 13 to 16 who have social, emotional and behavioural support needs.
- 1.3 The service has the capacity to provide up to six residential placements, two respite placements and 42 day placements.
- 1.4 Due to declining demand the school is operating well below capacity. There are currently six young people in residential places and 17 in day placements.
- 1.5 The average attendance rate for session 2012/13 was 75.65%.
- 1.6 Neither the location of the school or the model of provision fit well with present day practice. Despite the best efforts of the staff the provision has become increasingly out of step with the Council's priorities for Looked After Children and the ethos of Getting it Right for Every Child.

2. Main report

- 2.1 The use of the services at Wellington has declined significantly in recent years as the Council is committed to providing care and education for Edinburgh's young people wherever possible in the city of Edinburgh.
- 2.2 The current annual costs of services at Wellington are £2.252m. At full capacity this would equate to a residential cost per place of £155,000 a year and education costs per day school place of £30,000 a year. At current occupancy

levels the cost per day school place is £65,000 a year per head and the cost of a residential placement is £190,000 per child. The running costs of the school are set out in Appendix One

2.3 The condition of the buildings, its under occupancy and the rural location result in significantly higher overheads than those of comparable provision within Edinburgh. For example the unit costs of day placements at Gorgie Mills and Panmure Special Schools are £20,000 per annum. The school roll is much smaller than other special schools in the authority and this compromises the breadth and quality of provision. The location of the school means transport costs are very high. The normal transport time is 40 minutes for each journey and delays and inclement weather have a negative impact on curriculum time and extra-curricular activity. In addition the distant location is not suited to supporting the delivery of practice to support children and young people within their families and communities.

2.4 There have been ongoing concerns about some aspects of the quality of education provided. For example the school was inspected by HMIE in 2010. The evaluations of the five quality indicators are shown below.

Improvements in Performance	Learners' experiences	Meeting learning needs	The curriculum	Improvement through self evaluation
3 - Satisfactory	3 - Satisfactory	3 - Satisfactory	4 – Good	2 – Weak

2.5 The most recent inspection report of the residential care component of Wellington was published in June 2013. The outcomes demonstrated that while the support provided by the staff was good the overall quality of services had still not achieved a sufficient standard. The four quality indicators inspected are shown below:

Quality of Care and Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Leadership and Management
2 – Weak	3 – Adequate	4 - Good	2 – Weak

2.6 It is proposed that a decision is taken to consult on closing the services at Wellington and provide alternative services in Edinburgh. This would take effect on a planned and phased basis taking account of the leaving dates of the current pupils. Of the 23 young people currently at the school 16 are expected to leave between December 2013 and May 2014. It is therefore expected that up to 7 pupils will require an alternative education resource from August 2014. (Some of the 7 pupils may move to an alternative resource before then).

December 2013	12 pupils expected to leave	number left = 11
May 2014	4 pupils expected to leave	number left = 7

- 2.7 The movement of the staff group would be managed through natural turnover, transfer and redeployment to other Children and Families' residential and education services. The current staffing FTE's and number of staff is:

	FTE	Number of staff
Clerical staff	1.63	2
Catering/Domestic	9.68	10
Teachers	15.62	16
Care staff	22.44	24
TOTAL	49.37	52

Improving Support for Children and Young People in Edinburgh

Transition Arrangements

- 2.8 For the 7 young people directly affected the Council will ensure individual learning and care plans are in place that provide alternative high quality education and care options to meet their needs. The schools options for the seven pupils (4 of whom will be S5 and 3 of whom will be S4) are Gorgie Mills Special School (where an additional 12 places are planned), Panmure School, return to the young person's catchment secondary school with all necessary supports or, in cases of exceptional need, an alternative residential school placement.
- 2.9 The proposals are designed to ensure the new learning provision for young people is better than that currently available at Wellington. For example, pupils will have more class time, wider curricular access, a mixed gender environment and improved access to extracurricular activities.

Re - investment in Edinburgh

- 2.10 As part of the continuing development of an integrated model of support, the closure of Wellington will enable reinvestment to provide;
- 12 additional places in Gorgie Mills Special School.
 - significant additional resources for mainstream secondary schools to strengthen support for children within those schools.

The small number of pupils who require residential provision will be accommodated within existing care provision in Edinburgh.

- 2.11 Options for further enhancing specialist provision at Gorgie Mills Special School include the development of services with partner providers. These could offer a combination of personal support, personalised approaches to learning, core skills and vocational options. The vocational component of such partnerships would enhance Corporate Parenting objectives and contribute to the capacity of the Edinburgh Guarantee to achieve positive employment outcomes for Looked After Young People.

2.12 The increase in special school provision in Edinburgh will be underpinned by the strengthening of support in mainstream schools and by earlier intervention in the community for children in need: For example;

- Curriculum for excellence enables more personalised and inclusive provision in schools, including provision with a wide range of partners to meet diverse needs within mainstream and specialist provision.
- The Children and Families integrated support framework brings together additional support for learning and support in the family and community. This enables young people's needs to be addressed effectively at an earlier stage to maintain school placements, provide progressive support for all levels of need and promote effective engagement of learners and their families.
- The Council has introduced new services to support families in their communities. Family Solutions, the Young People's Service, Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and the expansion of Family Group Conferencing are improving the capacity of families to address difficulties at an earlier stage and successfully care for their children and young people within their own communities.

2.13 The opportunity for reinvestment created by this proposal will also provide scope for further improvements to strengthen the capacity of schools to provide alternatives to exclusion. Officers are exploring additional options with Headteachers including the extension of activity agreements to younger pupils on a targeted basis and enhanced facilities within schools where there are larger populations of learners requiring additional behaviour support and flexible provision. This is consistent with models of support that have been developed across Scotland.

2.14 Pilot work in Edinburgh extending activity agreements to S4-5 pupils has proved successful in enabling secondary schools to support bespoke approaches for young people with support needs.

“Partnership working is the best way of delivering a senior phase that meets the needs of a diverse range of learners and Curriculum for Excellence places an even greater focus than before on joint planning and delivery..... schools are not solely responsible for all of the provision offered in the senior phase but that they have a key role in bringing together their partners to plan and deliver a coherent curriculum that offers opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge and skills across a range of different contexts and settings.”

[Curriculum for Excellence – the Senior Phase A Statement from the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board.](#)

Consultation and Engagement

2.15 The consultation process for closing a special school is that which must be followed regarding the proposed closure of any school. It is prescribed in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. A full consultation paper will be available in advance of the consultation process based on the proposals set out

in this report. The Committee is asked to delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to complete this paper.

2.16 The statutory consultees for the proposal include:

1. The Parent Council of any affected school;
2. The parents of the pupils at the affected school;
3. The parents of any children expected to attend the affected school;
4. The affected students (depending on age and stage);
5. The staff at the affected school and trade union representatives;
6. Any other users at the affected school the Council considers relevant;
7. Affected Community Councils and Neighbourhood Partnerships; and Education Scotland.

Comments are also welcome from any party who has an interest in the proposal.

2.17 It is proposed two public meetings are arranged during the consultation period to allow members of the public to express their views. One meeting will be held within Gorgie Mills Special School in the City of Edinburgh and another meeting will be held in Wellington Special School in Midlothian. Staff from the Council will be present at both meetings to outline the proposals, take questions and discuss details. Dates of these meetings will be published in the detailed consultation proposal paper and advertised both in Edinburgh and in the area local to Wellington.

2.18 The legislation requires a minimum six week consultation period of term time during which representations on the proposal can be made. It is proposed that consultation takes place from 4 November 2013 to 16 December 2013. During this period the public meetings will take place.

2.19 At the end of the consultation period the Council must send to Education Scotland a copy of the proposal paper, written representations received by the authority during the consultation period (or, if agreed, a summary of representations) and a record of public meetings.

2.20 Education Scotland is required to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the relevant proposals and must submit this report to the Council. It is anticipated that their assessment would be undertaken during January 2014. The Council must then take account of this report in preparing the Consultation Report on the outcomes of the consultation.

2.21 This Consultation Report must be publicly available at least three weeks prior to its consideration by Council and notification will be given to those individuals or groups that have made representations during the consultation period. The report will include a summary of written representations received during the consultation period and representations made at the public meetings along with the Council response to representations made. It is anticipated that the consultation report will be presented to a meeting of the Council on 13 March 2014 setting out final recommendations.

- 2.22 Should the Council approve the closure of Wellington Special School, then Scottish Ministers would have six weeks from the date of the Council decision to decide whether to call in the proposals for determination. Should Scottish Ministers decide not to call in the proposals, then the Council could enact the decision. Based on a Council decision being taken on 13 March 2014, the six week potential call in period would conclude on 24 April 2014 with a view to ending care and education services at Wellington by 30 June 2014.
- 2.23 Wellington Special School is technically classified as a “rural” school. Wellington has no link to a local catchment area and provides no placements for Midlothian Council. However, in relation to special consideration for rural schools under section 12 (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, consideration on the potential impact on the local community will be assessed. During the consultation period consideration will also be given to future use of the building and potential impact for the local area.

Financial Impact

- 2.24 The closure of services at Wellington Special School would release up to £1.1m a year for re-investment in enhanced pupil supports in Edinburgh. It is proposed the Council re-invests significant resources in strengthening support for pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties in Edinburgh through:
- an additional 12 places at Gorgie Mills Special School - £500,000
 - additional resources in mainstream secondary schools to meet the needs of pupils within the school - £600,000.
- 2.25 The net annual recurring revenue savings from closing Wellington Special School are estimated at approximately £1.126m a year. In addition to these direct savings further economies would be achieved in staff travel and pupil transport.
- 2.26 The transitional costs of closing Wellington Special School will be subject to further assessment within the consultation period. The school has minimal impact on the local environment and economy. For example, all supplies and services are provided and purchased by the city of Edinburgh Council. However, we plan to advise Midlothian Council and any relevant local stakeholders of the proposals at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.27 In arriving at the net savings, the following assumptions have been made;
- If there is no potential alternative use for the buildings they would be demolished allowing property related costs such as rates and security to cease.
- The existing site would become surplus and sold for a capital receipt. It is our intention to seek consent from full Council for the ring-fencing of some or all of the capital receipt to improve the quality of children’s residential homes in Edinburgh.
- It should be noted that, based on a condition survey in February 2013, an estimated repairs and maintenance pressure at Wellington Special School of £1,235,892 over the next 5 years will be avoided.

It is proposed that the displacement of staff can be managed through natural turnover and transfer/redeployment to other Children and Families' residential and educational services.

3. Recommendations

To recommend that the Education, Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve that the statutory consultation is carried on the proposed closure of education services at Wellington Special School with a view to ending care and education services at Wellington by 30 June 2014 as set out in this report;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to develop a detailed consultation paper on the basis of the proposals outlined in this report;
3. Approve that the statutory consultation should commence in November 2013;
4. Note that it is the intention to return to a future meeting of the Full Council for a decision on the proposal;
5. Note that the proposal will require Scottish Ministers approval prior to implementation should the Council decide to proceed;
6. Note the intention to request consent from the Council to ring fence some or all of any capital receipts for future education and care provision within the city of Edinburgh.
7. Approve the proposals for the development of additional pupil support services in the city of Edinburgh.

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

Links

Coalition pledges	P1. Increase support for vulnerable children, including help for families so that fewer go into care P4 Draw up a long-term strategic plan to tackle both over-crowding and under use in schools P5 Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum P7 Further develop the Edinburgh Guarantee to improve work prospects for school leavers P29 Ensure the Council continues to take on apprentices and steps up efforts to prepare young people for work
Council outcomes	CO2. Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities CO3. Our children and young people in need, or with a disability, have improved life chances

**Single Outcome
Agreement
Appendices**

CO5. Our children and young people are safe from harm or fear of harm, and do not harm others within their communities

CO6. Our children and young people's outcomes are not undermined by poverty and inequality

SO3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential

1. Wellington School Revenue Budget 2013/14

Appendix 1

Wellington School	
Breakdown of revenue budget 2013/14	
Description of expenditure	Total £K
Staffing	
Teachers	696
Residential care officers *	1,003
Cooks	24
Manual staff	100
Instructors	38
Drivers	37
Managerial and business support	120
Total Staffing	2,018
Non-staffing	
Premises	133
Transport	10
Food and drink, clothing, excursions	80
Care commission charges	4
Pocket money, birthday and Christmas payments	11
Income	-4
Total non-staffing	234
Total revenue budget 2013/14	2,252
* Residential care officers also support children in the classroom during the day	