

DECISION-MAKER:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LEARNING
SUBJECT:	RELOCATION OF THE MELBOURNE SCHOOL PRU TO THE MILLBROOK SITE
DATE OF DECISION:	19 SEPTEMBER 2012
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR: INFRASTRUCTURE & STRATEGY, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LEARNING
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	

BRIEF SUMMARY

At the Cabinet meeting of 6 June 2011, it was agreed "to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services & Learning, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Resources to take any action necessary to facilitate the use and occupation of the Former Millbrook Community School site for the provision of children's services, including services ancillary to those functions, subject to compliance with any statutory requirements. This delegation shall include, but is not limited to, the power to grant or acquire property and contractual interests in the site to deliver such services."

In line with this decision, this report seeks approval to determine the proposal to relocate the Melbourne School Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to the site previously occupied by the Millbrook Community School, from 2 September 2013. This will serve to co-locate this provision with that of the Compass Centre PRU, which was relocated to this site in September 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To consider and take into account the outcome of stakeholder consultation, as set out in *Appendix 1*.
- (ii) To determine whether or not to approve the relocation of the Melbourne School PRU provision to the site previously occupied by the Millbrook Community School, effective from 2 September 2013.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Melbourne School PRU currently provides alternative learning for the city's Key Stage 4 (11-16 years) pupils permanently excluded from mainstream school. However, the Melbourne School PRU's present accommodation is unsuitable, against both quantitative and qualitative measures. Critically, the current buildings do not provide sufficient space to accommodate the number of children presently on roll. It is also to be expected that this number will rise in future years, in line with the projected increase in the general school population, making the current site increasingly unfit-for-purpose and unsafe.
2. Owing to the fact that the Melbourne School PRU has insufficient space to

accommodate its current and future needs (and taking into account the fact that there is no scope to expand the existing buildings), it is necessary to relocate the PRU to a larger site. Due to its being ideally suited to educational reutilisation and the fact that it has recently been vacated, the former Millbrook Community School site has been identified as the preferable alternative location. Such a relocation would also have the associated benefit of co-locating all PRU provision in the city on one site, which would deliver a more efficient and readily manageable operating model, and one much better equipped to ensure a good education for the pupils in question.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. The existence of alternative options for the relocation of the Melbourne School PRU would necessarily be reliant upon the existence of alternative sites that were readily accessible and provided suitable facilities for this type of provision. However, there are no other vacant sites in the city that have the same level/standard of pre-established educational provision ready to be utilised. As such, there are no other competing alternatives for a potential relocation.
4. Pursuing the option of not relocating this provision would present the authority with a significant issue in terms of the Melbourne School PRU continuing to have insufficient capacity to serve its pupils. Such an option would also fail to deliver improved accommodation for the Key Stage 4 provision and would result in the authority continuing to incur the costs associated with operating its PRU provision across a split site. As such, this option has been rejected, particularly given the attendant health and safety risks this would increasingly incur.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

5. SCC is proposing to bring together responsibility for Alternative Learning in the city to include all Key Stages. This will enable the Authority to better fulfil its statutory responsibilities for pupils permanently excluded and provide at least a good education and the prospect, where appropriate, for the return of pupils to mainstream education. The local authority's ability to coordinate the education of children in its care would also be enhanced significantly and made more efficient.
6. The proposal has required a restructuring of the current service provision and expansion of the current staffing structure. No staff were either made redundant or dismissed as part of the restructure and, as such, there are no redundancy costs associated with it. Staff were placed into one of two categories: employees in unchanged posts; and employees considered natural successors, as per agreed selection criteria. In line with SCC protocol, formal consultation with staff on these proposals was conducted between 20 May and 10 June 2011. The restructure itself was approved by the Head of Organisational Development on 13 June 2011 and took effect on 5 September 2011.
7. In order to support this restructuring of provision, the Authority is looking to improve and extend the educational facilities available to the Melbourne School PRU. Critical in this respect is the fact that the existing accommodation is unsuited to the needs of its current intake, in terms of both

the capacity and the quality of the facilities on offer, and the Authority's ability to meet its health and safety obligations. If the PRU were to remain in its current premises, this situation would be exacerbated by the projected increase in pupil numbers across the city.

8. As such, it is proposed that the Melbourne provision is relocated to the site previously occupied by the Millbrook Community School, with effect from 2 September 2013 (i.e. the beginning of the 2013/14 academic year). The proposed new site has the dual advantages of being large enough to accommodate the Melbourne provision, whilst also affording significant benefits in terms of the standard of educational facilities available. In terms of the later point, the buildings on the proposed new site house a range of facilities that are not readily accessible at the existing site. Included within these are:
 - Science labs
 - ICT suite
 - Technology rooms/workshops
 - Performance areas
 - Sports hall and gymnasium

In addition, the Millbrook site has extensive external play/recreation and sport development space. This move would therefore result in a significant improvement for Key Stage 4 PRU pupils within the city.

9. If approved, it is intended that a suitable area of the Millbrook buildings will be refurbished to provide a permanent home for the Melbourne School PRU. This work would be completed between January and August 2013 and would include the move of the Melbourne School PRU's furniture and equipment from the old to the new site. The onsite building works would also include works to improve the element of the building currently housing the Compass School PRU.
10. The proposal has been the subject of significant informal consultation within the Authority. In line with this, the decision to put forward the proposal for the relocation of the Melbourne School PRU to the Millbrook site was taken in partnership with the Headteacher of the school and key officers from within Children's Services & Learning.
11. The formal six-week consultation on this proposal was commenced on Tuesday 12 June 2012 and concluded on 23 July 2012, timed to ensure maximum opportunity for input from schools in particular and to avoid potential contributions being compromised by the school summer holiday period. This process comprised:
 - A consultation document, sent out to all parent/carers of pupils currently educated at the Melbourne School PRU; the School Management Committee; all PRU staff; trade unions; the PCT; and Headteachers of all schools within the city. This document included a response form, by which stakeholders were offered a means to feed their views into the decision making process; and
 - A public meeting, held at the Millbrook site on 2 July 2012, which was

open to all parties. Public Notices were displayed at the entrances of both the Melbourne School PRU and the Millbrook site and in local housing offices. The Public notices are attached to this report as *Appendix 2*.

12. There were several responses to the formal consultation process, with the majority of the views expressed being in favour of the proposal. Of those that objected to the proposal, one respondent stated that they did not feel it appropriate to co-locate all Key Stages of PRU provision and, further, that the additional travel time implied would, for some Key Stage 4 pupils, discourage their attendance. In terms of this, it is the Council's view that co-location of this provision is entirely the correct decision, in terms of the management efficiencies this delivers, the opportunity it provides to direct greater education resource to the core business of learning and teaching and also in terms of the fact that it provides a significant improvement in the facilities available to Key Stage 4 pupils. Furthermore, it is felt that this improvement in the standard of facilities will offset the travel times in terms of incentives to attendance. Pupils having to attend from further than the prescribed distances will qualify for subsidised travel under the Council's School Transport policy.

A second respondent felt that insufficient consultation had been carried out in relation to this proposal. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is always possible to add to consultation arrangements, the Authority can confirm that the level of consultation undertaken *exceeds* the requirements for a proposal of this nature. This respondent also felt that there was the potential for an increase in crime and/or anti-social behaviour in the Millbrook area, should these plans be taken forward. However, as there is not presently a problem with the behaviour of PRU pupils in the community at the current location, it is felt that the evidence tells against this being an issue. In this respect, it is worth noting that there have been no report incidents of PRU pupils engaging in such activities in the localities of Melbourne and Compass during the 2011/12 academic year.

A summary of the responses to consultation is included in *Appendix 1*.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

13. At the meeting on 16 April 2012, Cabinet gave approval to spend £2,500,000 from the Children's Services & Learning Capital Programme in order to invest in provision for the city's Pupil Referral Unit. This spend will be allocated to the refurbishment of the Millbrook premises, with the purpose of providing suitable facilities for both the Key Stage 2-3 provision (which is already based at the site) and the Key Stage 4 provision (the relocation of which is the subject of this paper).
14. The premises costs of running this part of the Millbrook site are estimated to be no more that £50,000 which will be partially offset from savings on the current site. A site manager has been employed to manage the site. These costs will be met from within the Education & Commissioning division budget.

15. Should the Council be unable to either find a tenant for or sell the freehold for the current Melbourne School site the council will be responsible for security of the building which may cost up to £30,000 depending on how long the site is vacant.

Property/Other

16. As all costs are being funded from CSL budgets, there is no comment from Property.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

17. In accordance with s.14 of the Education Act 1996, the Council is responsible for ensuring sufficient schools are available for providing appropriate primary and secondary education in their area. Section 19 requires the Council to make arrangements for the provision of suitable full or part time education at school or otherwise than at school for children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not receive suitable education for any period unless such arrangements are made for them. Any school established under s.19 is known as a PRU.

Other Legal Implications:

18. In relocating a PRU within the city the Council is required to have regards to the impact on staff, pupils and the local community in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and its duties under s.17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998.
19. Regard must also be had to the guidance for Local Authorities and Schools on PRUs and Alternative Provision issued by the Depart for Education.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

20. The relocation of the Melbourne School PRU to more educationally-suitable premises, coupled with capital investment in the associated buildings will contribute to the outcomes of both the Council’s 14-19 Strategy and Children & Young People’s Plan by improving the educational offer that can be provided to pupils who attend this institution. It is also to be expected that this relocation will have an impact on the highways network, in terms of traffic movements that would previously have been to the Melbourne site being redirected to the Millbrook site. However, it is anticipated that this impact will be slight, due to the fact that the numbers of pupils attending this provision is not significant. It is also to be noted that this proposal could have implications for the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy. Again, it is felt that the improved educational offer that can be provided from Millbrook should result in enhanced prospects for pupils attending the PRU and thereby have a positive impact in this respect.

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KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Summary of Responses to Statutory Consultation
2.	Public Notice

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Integrated Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents

Integrated Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None	
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