

Consultation on the relocation of St Martins Special School

SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of the development of our Building Schools for the Future Strategy for Change, consultation has been carried out on a proposal to co-locate St Martins School on the same site as Noel-Baker School, as part of the rebuild programme. This report notes the outcomes of the consultation and confirms the proposal.
- 1.2 The Council's strategy is to rebuild, where appropriate, existing special schools on mainstream secondary school sites. This will enhance provision for every student and maximise the scope for full inclusion, as well as providing better learning opportunities for all members of the school community.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the proposal to re-locate St Martins Special School to a new building co-located on the grounds of Noel-Baker Community School and Language College.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Derby City is currently working towards a planned programme of secondary school development through Wave 5 of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) to transform secondary education in Derby. This is part of the estimated £180m funding to replace or significantly refurbish those schools with secondary age pupils, plus an estimated £25m specifically for ICT. The BSF programme requires Local Authorities to consider the implications of building new Special Schools, and co-locating them with mainstream secondary schools.
- 3.2 The Council's vision is to rebuild, where appropriate, existing special schools on mainstream secondary school sites. This will enhance provision for every student and maximise the scope for full inclusion, as well as providing better learning opportunities for all members of the community.

- 3.3 The proposal to co-locate St Martins School on the same site as Noel-Baker provides an exciting opportunity to have a new facility that is more suited to the needs of pupils, and one that will provide a stimulating environment for all people who use the building. In addition to new classrooms, the new school will include specialist facilities to implement individualised learning programmes required for the needs of the pupils attending the school. Co-location will promote the highest level of pupil integration, especially socially and in such activities as sport, music, drama, art and vocational courses.
- 3.4 St Martins School and Noel-Baker School already have an effective working partnership, and the possibility of co-location will offer improved opportunity for all pupils at the two schools. Noel-Baker is strongly committed to a full inclusion philosophy and has had great success in the past with pupils with special needs. The school has found that academic standards amongst all pupils have been raised by the development of its very caring ethos and approach. The school is looking forward to the opportunities and challenges presented by this proposal to co-locate a special and a mainstream school on site.
- 3.5 As the Noel-Baker site is less than two miles away from St Martin's current site 'as the crow flies', there was no legal obligation for the Local Authority to undergo a statutory consultation procedure. However, a consultation paper on the proposal was circulated to all key stakeholders. A copy of the consultation document is attached as Appendix 2. The consultation period ran from 23 April to 4 June 2008, and the majority of the responses supported the co-location of St Martins on the Noel-Baker site. Responses to the consultation are set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.6 Governing Bodies of both Schools have confirmed their support for this proposal. The consultation document was circulated extensively, including parents and staff at both schools as well as local members and unions.

For more information contact:	Rita Silvester, Assistant Director for Performance and Commissioning, Children and Young People's Department, e-mail: rita.silvester@derby.gov.uk or Liz Beswick, Head of Assessment and Commissioning, Children and Young People's Department, email: liz.beswick@derby.gov.uk
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 – Consultation Document Appendix 3 – Consultation Responses

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 None specifically arising from the report itself. The rebuilding of St Martins Special School will be funded through the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Legal

- 2.1 If the proposal to co-locate St Martins with Noel-Baker is approved, further work will be completed regarding the legal implications with co-locating a community school on the site of a foundation school.
- 2.2 As the Noel-Baker site is less than two miles away from St Martin's current site 'as the crow flies', there was no legal obligation for the Local Authority to undergo a statutory consultation procedure.

Personnel

- 3.1 As the new school size is planned in line with current pupil trends, there are unlikely to be any major staffing implications. If a decision is made to locate the new building on the Noel-Baker Secondary School site, it is planned that the new St Martins School will retain its separate identity, management structure and staffing.
- 3.2 The shared site option may involve some changes to site management, caretaking, cleaning, dining and administration arrangements. This would be subject to detailed discussions between both governing bodies as Noel-Baker is a foundation school and therefore employs its staff, whilst St Martins is a community school where the Council is the employer.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The proposal will ensure that services for some of the city's most vulnerable children will be enhanced and protected.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 The proposal furthers the Corporate Plan priority of *supporting everyone in learning and achieving*, focusing on the outcome of *improving educational achievement and narrowing the gaps in attainment*.



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

Consultation on the Relocation of St Martins Special School

May 2008

Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation document deals with the issues linked to the Council's Building Schools for the Future proposals to move St Martins Special School to a new building co-located on the grounds of Noel-Baker Community School and Language College.
- 1.2 As the proposal is to transfer St Martins Special School to a school site less than two miles away from its current site 'as the crow flies', the normal statutory consultation procedures do not apply. However, the Council would still like to get the views of people interested in the proposals including pupils, parents, school staff, governors, and members of the local community.
- 1.3 Views from this consultation will be considered when making the decision on whether or not to relocate St Martins Special School to Noel-Baker Secondary School. Governing Bodies of both Schools have said that they support the proposal.

Background

2. Derby City is currently working towards a planned programme of secondary school development through Wave 5 of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) to transform secondary education in Derby. This is part of the estimated £180m funding to replace or significantly refurbish those schools with secondary age pupils, plus an estimated £25 million specifically for ICT. The BSF programme requires Local Authorities to consider the implications of building new Special Schools, co-locating them with mainstream secondary schools.

Why a new school?

- 3.1 The main building at St Martins is in poor condition and requires replacement of, and repairs to, roofs, windows, guttering, down pipes and external walls. The layout is unsuitable for the needs of the current pupils, with a number of classrooms accessed directly from the school hall. The technology block is at the end of its life. The dining block is also in poor condition. Both of these blocks have identified structural issues and are regularly monitored by structural engineers.

- 3.2 The building also has major suitability issues and does not provide a good learning environment for the needs of pupils attending the school. Disabled access is limited.
- 3.3 Existing teaching spaces are small and storage is very limited. The support spaces for teaching and non-teaching staff are extremely limited resulting in teaching methods being inhibited.
- 3.4 The proposed scheme provides an exciting opportunity to have a new facility that is more suited to the needs of pupils and one that will provide a stimulating environment for all people who use the building. The school will be designed in accordance with the Government's latest guidance for special educational provision.
- 3.5 In addition to new classrooms, the new school will include specialist facilities to implement individualised learning programmes required for the needs of the pupils attending the school.
- 3.6 It will also offer specialist teaching areas for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The options we are consulting on:

Option 1

To retain, refurbish and upgrade the existing building

- 4.1 The existing St Martins Special School building is unsuitable for the needs of pupils and is in a poor condition that means investing further large amounts of funding in the building would be wasteful. This would offer little opportunity for the learning environment to be improved.

Option 2

Construction of a new school on the existing St Martins School site

- 4.2 The existing school has a cramped site, which is poorly suited to the development of a new facility. Constructing a new school on this site would be difficult and potentially much more expensive because the existing school would need to be maintained somewhere else during the building period. This option would also fail to meet national and local policies to offer pupils with special needs closer links to mainstream schooling.

Option 3

Construction of a new building on the Noel-Baker Secondary School site

- 4.3 As mentioned in Option 2, national and local policies exist to promote the development of closer links to mainstream schooling for pupils with special needs.
- 4.4 The Council's vision is to rebuild, where appropriate, existing special schools on mainstream secondary school sites. This will enhance provision for every student and maximise the scope for full inclusion as well as providing better learning opportunities for all members of the community. Co-location will promote the highest

level of pupil integration, especially socially and in such activities as sport, music, drama, art and vocational courses.

- 4.5 Currently St Martins School and Noel-Baker School have an effective working partnership and the possibility of co-location will offer improved opportunity for all pupils at the two schools.
- 4.6 Like many of the secondary schools in the city, Noel-Baker Community School and Language College is within a planning 'green wedge'. Should the Noel-Baker site be agreed as the preferred option, then the Council will work closely with the planning authorities to devise a scheme to minimise any impact on the 'green wedge'.
- 4.7 There are significant benefits to locating the new St Martins School at Noel-Baker:
- The Noel-Baker site provides opportunities for the construction of a new St Martins School building close to the existing school buildings.
 - Noel-Baker is on a relatively large site. After construction of a new St Martins School on the site there should be sufficient playing field space available to meet with regulations. This is currently being investigated.
 - Noel-Baker is strongly committed to a full inclusion philosophy and has had great success in the past with pupils with special needs. The school has found that academic standards amongst all pupils have been raised by the development of its very caring approach. The school is prepared to face the challenges and opportunities presented by the proposal to co-locate a special and a mainstream school on site.
 - Co-location of the two schools will promote greater inclusion for pupils who are currently educated in a very poor building away from their peers. The development of close links between the schools will be particularly strong in the areas of art, drama, music, sport, social activities, ICT and technology. Staff and pupils from both schools will benefit from the opportunities to share expertise.
 - Noel-Baker has a sixth form. Both schools are keen to expand opportunities for school based vocational courses. Co-operative work between the two schools on one site will enhance and develop the school's strength in these areas.
 - The two schools have indicated that they will consider sharing catering facilities and student support resources if the proposal goes ahead.
- 4.8 The proposed scheme provides an exciting opportunity to create a leading national example of inclusive specialist provision for all pupils.

Financial Issues

5. The building/refurbishment of the new St Martins Special School will be funded through the Building Schools for the Future programme. The appraisal for Noel-Baker Secondary School is also underway.

Personnel Issues

6. As the new school size is planned in line with current pupil trends, there are unlikely to be any major staffing implications. If a decision is made to locate the new building on the Noel-Baker Secondary School site, it is planned that the new St Martins school will retain its separate identity, management structure and staffing. The shared site option may involve some changes to site management, care taking, cleaning, dining and administration arrangements. This would be subject to detailed discussions between both governing bodies as Noel-Baker is a foundation school and therefore employs its staff whilst St Martins is a community school meaning that the Council is the employer. The Council will consult and work closely with unions representing teaching and non-teaching staff.

What next?

- 7.1 If you have any comments to make on the proposals included in this consultation document, please complete and return the attached questionnaire to the address provided.
- 7.2 Consultation on the options in this paper will last until **Wednesday, 4 June 2008**. By this time all interested parties will have had six weeks to consider the document and respond. The Council will carefully consider all opinions expressed in writing.

Contact information

- 7.1 We are very interested in your views and welcome your comments. Please respond to us by using the questionnaire and response sheet attached to this paper.
- 7.2 Should you wish to discuss any specific aspects of this proposal, please contact:

Liz Beswick, Head of Assessment and Commissioning, Children and Young People's Department.
Tel 01332 716943.
E-mail: liz.beswick@derby.gov.uk

St Martins School Consultation Questionnaire

Name of Person completing form:
(optional)

School/Organisation (if applicable):

Please tick which box best applies to you:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil - St Martins | <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil – Noel-Baker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent - St Martins | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent – Noel-Baker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff - St Martins | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff – Noel-Baker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chair of Governors - St Martins | <input type="checkbox"/> Chair of Governors - Noel-Baker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head Teacher of St Martins | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Teacher of Noel-Baker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resident - St Martins area | <input type="checkbox"/> Resident - Noel-Baker area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state) | |

Please return completed form to:

Hayley Millward, Children and Young People's Services, Derby City Council, Middleton House, 27 St Mary's Gate, Derby, DE1 3NN.

Closing date for responses:

Wednesday, 4 June 2008

Preferred Option:

Please indicate the option you support as providing the best outcome for the pupils and parents of both St Martins and Noel-Baker.

Option 1	To retain, refurbish and upgrade the existing building	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 2	Construction of a new school on the existing St Martins site	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 3	Construction of a new building on the Noel-Baker Community School and Language College site	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give further comments on the next page if you wish...

Further comments

If you have any further comments or questions concerning any points raised in this document, please use the space provided below. If you have a question, please include a contact address and/or a telephone number for a response.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please return completed form to: Hayley Millward, Children and Young People's Services, Derby City Council, Middleton House, 27 St Mary's Gate, Derby, DE1 3NN.

Deadline for return: Wednesday, 4 June 2008.

Consultation Responses

The following table shows the number of responses received in relation to the options outlined in the consultation document:

Option	Number of responses in support
To retain, refurbish and upgrade the existing building (option 1)	0
Construction of a new school on the existing St Martins site (Option 2)	1
Construction of a new building on the Noel-Baker Community School and Language College site (Option 3)	4

A number of people chose to submit written comments. Some of these comments were in addition to the above responses whilst some people chose to comment instead of ticking one of the above options. A summary of the comments received is set out below:

In support of relocation:

‘Anything less than a new school and co-location would prove a waste of time, money and resources. The existing site is not fit for purpose. A new build there would not enable the staff to provide the education needed and that they wish to give. The co-location would be of great benefit to all concerned. Both schools which include pupils and staff would be able to access resources and take part in teaching not available at present.’

‘We feel that the current buildings are in a poor condition with no room available to rebuild. We feel that it makes sense to co-locate to Noel-Baker thus strengthening the links already made. We hope that St Martins retains its MLD designation with DCSF and that existing criteria for admission and entitlement to SEN transport continues as now. As a Team we would like to see all special schools within the city to follow as in option 3.’

‘I fully support the proposal for co-location between St Martins and Noel-Baker. There has been a full consultation process and the benefits to all pupils, school staff and the community will significantly enhance education and quality of life for everyone involved.’

‘We are looking forward to the co-location and want to explore all of the opportunities it will provide to both staff and students in both schools. This is a very positive move which will enhance provision for all concerned.’

In support of construction of a new school on existing St Martins site.

'I am concerned that a large number of special needs/special behaviour children on the same grounds as Noel-Baker students will disrupt the Noel-Baker students. There are already disruptive children in the school and I don't want potentially more causing disruption. My child is in year 7, so has at least another 4 years at school. There's going to be enough disruption with the rebuilding of Noel-Baker – I do not want his education compromised over the next few important years. He'll have left by the time it's all completed. So please do not rebuild St Martins there as well. Thank you.'

Other comments:

Unison responded to indicate that they consider 'construction of a new building on the Noel-Baker site would probably be the best option'. They went on to raise a number of questions which have been responded to.

Sport England asked the Council to consult with them at an early stage if the preferred option is likely to have an impact on playing fields.

Total responses received = 8