

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

FULL PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE THE COUNTSTHORPE NURSERY SCHOOL

Part 1 - Notice is given in accordance with Section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 that Leicestershire intends to discontinue The Countesthorpe Nursery School from 23rd August 2017.

1. Name, address and contact details of proposer

Leicestershire County Council, School Organisation Service, Children and Family Services, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8RF

Tel: 0116 3056661

Email: Sharon.Townsend@leics.gov.uk

2. Name, address and category of school

The Countesthorpe Nursery School, The Drive, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire. LE8 5PB: DFE No 1000

3. Reason for Closure

Countesthorpe Nursery occupies a Grade II listed building alongside residential properties on The Drive, an unadopted road. The building is not suitable to expand and requires significant improvement works.

At present there are sufficient places at the Countesthorpe Nursery to meet Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) places. However, the number of children attending the nursery has risen in the last 2 years - in the 2016 summer term 78 children claimed FEEE. By September 2017 eligible children will be entitled to an additional 15 hours FEEE. Ongoing housing development and forecast growth in the area suggest that it would not be possible to meet the additional demand for places within the current building in future years. Further, the Local Authority does not consider it possible to expand the current provision to ensure sufficiency of early year's childcare or that it would be an effective use of resources to do so.

The nursery is unable to provide facilities for children with special educational needs and disabilities and there are no changing facilities. The lack of space and kitchen facilities means that children cannot stay for lunch so sessions are split into mornings and afternoons and therefore cannot offer full day sessions. There is limited space for small group working and no private areas for parent discussions.

The nursery is currently located adjacent to the Countesthorpe Leysland Community College campus. Recent works undertaken on the campus to improve security and safeguarding means that parents accessing the Nursery can no longer park within the Academy grounds; this has caused pressure in relation to traffic movement on The Drive. Relocating the nursery will have a positive impact on the College.

4. Pupil numbers and admissions

The current provision has a capacity of 30 children. There are currently 57 children on roll (29 boys and 28 girls) who are aged between 3 and 4 years old (30 are 3 years old and 27 are 4 years old). All of the children are non-compulsory school age and 1 child has SEN. <http://www.countesthorpenurseryschool.co.uk/about-us/our-future/>

5. Displaced Pupils & Quality/Quantity of Provision

The proposal is to close the existing Nursery facility and to support Greenfield Primary School to establish a governor led pre-school on the Greenfield Primary School site in purpose built accommodation. As part of this process the Nursery would move from having LA maintained status to become a Governor run pre-school. It is proposed that the new pre-school would expand from offering 30 places to offering 45 places and that those children currently attending the Nursery would be offered places at the new provision.

The establishment of a governor led pre-school on the Greenfield Primary site would require a larger purpose built facility. The number of children attending the nursery has risen in the last 2 years and it is anticipated that it will continue to do so due to housing developments and population growth as well as the implementation of the additional 15 hours FEEE for eligible children. The proposal would address the increase in demand for places whilst co-location with the primary school will enable parents to drop off their children for either the nursery or primary school (or both) in one location. It will also ensure that any children currently attending the nursery who would be displaced by the closure will have a smooth transition to the new provision. It is intended that staff will transfer and therefore any disruption to the care of such children will be reduced to a minimum.

The capital costs for constructing the purpose built nursery will be funded from the County Council Capital Programme. The new nursery building will be finished prior to the implementation date to ensure that there is no break in the provision.

Long term value for money will be achieved by disposing of the current Nursery building, which is no longer fit for purpose, and bringing about economies of scale.

The County Council considers that the transfer of staff to the governor run pre-school will ensure that the quality of the provision currently being provided will not be affected. It will also ensure that there is no loss of the expertise and specialism that the Nursery currently retains. What is more, it is considered that the new building will provide a good basis for the provision to continue to improve.

6. Impact on the Community, Travel and Accessibility

The location of the new pre-school at Greenfield Primary School is approximately 1 mile from the current Nursery. It is considered that this location will be easier to access than the current location of the Nursery and it will also allow for parents to park closer to the provision than is currently possible.

It is anticipated that there will be community benefits by reducing traffic issues related to the current location and through expanding of the number of places available to future proof against increased demand.

Many parents with children at the nursery also have siblings at Greenfield, so the proposal would result in fewer car journeys needing to be made for them. Parents responding to a pre-consultation stated that it is sometimes too far to walk with young children from Greenfield Primary School and then to the nursery so they tend to drive. However, with the proposal to build a nursery at Greenfield Primary School, some parents will be able to walk to the new nursery as they will no longer have to make the journey to The Drive;

95% of children on the waiting list for the nursery also have siblings at Greenfield Primary School so it is not anticipated that the proposals will lead to an increase in traffic.

The County Council considers that any other impact on the Community will be minimal.

7. Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation

The process for the closure of a maintained Nursery is defined by the Statutory Guidance relating to Opening and Closing Maintained Schools as published by the DfE in April 2016.

In brief this requires:

- A period of informal/ pre-consultation for a minimum of 6 weeks. This will be led by Greenfield Primary School and guided by officers in School Organisation Service.
- Publication of a Statutory Notice by the LA following consideration of consultation findings.
- A period of representation (formal consultation) of 4 weeks.
- A decision to be taken by the LA to determine the Statutory Notice- this will normally be done in consultation with the Director of C&FS and Lead Member although it may require reference to Cabinet should there be significant objections.
- Implementation of the proposals.

It is intended that the closure of the Nursery will take effect on 24th August 2017 and the new provision located at Greenfield Primary School would open on the same date.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any interested party may support, object to, or make comment upon the proposal by sending them to School Organisation Service, Children and Family Services, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8RF or by email to sharon.townsend@leics.gov.uk

The closing date for comments and objections is Monday, 3rd April 2017.

Signed: Lauren Haslam
Director of Law and Governance

Date: Monday, 6th March 2017