

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 16 May 2019

Report of the Head of Service - Asset Management

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
Burnley Central East,
Burnley Central West,
Burnley North East, Burnley
Rural, Burnley South West

The Provision of Additional Primary School Places in North Burnley

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

Lancashire County Council has a statutory duty to ensure that a primary or secondary school place is available for every child of statutory school age living in Lancashire who requests one.

This report outlines the current and projected position in the North Burnley planning area and recommends that additional places be made available at Briercliffe Primary School for 2020, initially through temporary expansion.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve a temporary increase, for one year only, in the Reception intake of Briercliffe Primary School in North Burnley, from 45 to 60 places for September 2020, to be accommodated within the existing building.
- (ii) Approve a permanent increase in Reception intakes for subsequent years to 60 places, through the provision of additional permanent accommodation on the existing school site, subject to obtaining relevant planning permission and Section 77(3) School Standards and Framework Act 1998 consent for the change of use of the land (or meeting the terms of The School Playing Fields General Disposal and Change of Use Consent (No 5) 2014).

(iii) Approve the expenditure listed in Appendix 'A' for the permanent expansion of the school.

Background and Advice

As detailed in the 'School Place Provision Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20' approved by Cabinet in August 2017, after a steady decrease between 1989 and 2001, birth rates across the county have subsequently been rising.

In addition, the changing dynamics of Lancashire's population, influenced by increased births, immigration, housing developments and economic migration, means that the provision of school places must also change in order to meet the changing needs of residents. This can be through provision of additional places, or through the redistribution of existing places within the county.

In dealing with rising numbers resulting from higher birth rates, it is necessary to assess whether or not this is a short term increase or a more sustained trend. Short term increases in demand can often be met by asking schools to co-operate in years of higher demand by taking in higher reception numbers, especially when other year groups are not full and there is sufficient accommodation in the school. However, if the growth is persistent, this is obviously not sustainable. In such cases, permanent additional places must be provided, either by increasing the size of existing schools or establishing new schools. In order to ensure that there is sustainable growth, three years' worth of increased demand will normally need to be evidenced before plans are put in place to permanently increase provision.

Burnley Planning Area had been identified as a hotspot area, but due to the number of schools the area covered (23 primary schools), it was difficult to pinpoint exactly where this shortfall fell. In early 2018, following investigation and appropriate approval, the old Burnley Planning Area was replaced by 3 new Planning Areas known as North Burnley, South Burnley and West Burnley. North Burnley remains to be a popular area with popular schools. Higher birth cohorts for Reception years in 2018 and 2020 are expected to lead to more preferences for admission than the Published Admission Number available. Hotspots show in 2020 and all subsequent years. In addition to a sustained birth need there is also housing development expected to yield an increased intake in the future.

The table below shows demand in the North Burnley area based on the number of recorded births:

	Total Published Admission Number	Forecast intake based on births				
		Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020	Sept 2021	*Sept 2022
Reception Places	365	366	314	375	373	373

*this is based on an assumption because the birth data is not available for this year yet.

The table shows the expected intakes for the North Burnley primary schools, based on recent admissions to the schools, when compared with the corresponding birth rates 4 years earlier. In this area, 95.9% of pupils attended their local schools but some children have had to travel further afield to access places. All of the primary schools in the North Burnley area have filled or almost filled in Reception year for the last 7 years.

The above figures are based only on birth demand and do not take into account the projected impact of housing development in the area. The table below shows projected demand resulting from live births and housing:

	Total Published Admission Number	Forecast intake (Births and Housing Projections)				
		Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020	Sept 2021	Sept 2022
Reception Places	365	366	315	377	376	377

The above information demonstrates that there will be sufficient primary school places available for the September 2019 Reception intake. Once the impact from housing and increased birth rate has been taken into account, there is projected to be a shortfall of places from September 2020 onwards.

In order to provide the additional places required, it is recommended to approve a temporary increase for one year only in the Reception intake of Briercliffe Primary School in North Burnley, from 45 to 60 places for September 2020, which can be accommodated within the existing premises. This will then be followed by a permanent increase in the Reception admission number for subsequent years to 60 places. It is proposed that this will be enabled through the provision of additional permanent accommodation on the existing school site (subject to obtaining relevant planning permission and Section 77(3) School Standards and Framework Act 1998 consent for the change of use of the land (or meeting the terms of The School Playing Fields General Disposal and Change of Use Consent (No 5) 2014).

The statutory process would be followed to enlarge premises as set out in the Prescribed Alterations Regulations (see part 5) if:

- the proposed enlargement is permanent (longer than three years) and would increase the capacity of the school by:
 - more than 30 pupils; and
 - 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser).
- the proposal involves making permanent any temporary enlargement (which was intended to be in place for no more than three years) that meets the above threshold.

As the size of the proposed expansion at Briercliffe Primary School falls below the levels described above, the statutory procedure is not required to be followed.

Rationale for expansion

All schools within the area of growth were contacted in order to seek expressions of interest in expansion, before visits to interested schools then took place.

In an initial assessment of the potential to expand existing schools, the following factors were considered which are contained within the School Place Provision Strategy (<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/children-education-and-families/school-place-provision-strategy/>)

- The current strength of the school in terms of attainment levels and leadership;
- Parental preference;
- The existing size and layout of the school, and its potential for expansion;
- The existing site and the area available to expand the buildings and maintain adequate play and sports space;
- Access to the site and proximity to the area of growth;
- Any potential joint investment benefits which are immediately obvious.

On application of these criteria, it was decided to propose the expansion of Briercliffe Primary School because it was the only option which:

- expressed an interest to expand,
- fit the criteria above and
- would provide the amount of additional places required for the North Burnley area.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

If additional primary school places are not created, there is a risk that the Authority would fail in its statutory responsibility to make sure that a maintained school place is available to all Lancashire children of the appropriate age range who want one.

Providing additional places increases the overall capacity in the areas and, if birth rates fail to yield the expected number of pupils for 2020 intake, or there is an increased level of outward migration of families from this area, there may be surplus places.

Land and Property

The expansion of Briercliffe Primary School could be accommodated on the existing school site. A feasibility assessment has been carried out for the proposed expansion.

The approval of any physical school expansion will be subject to obtaining relevant planning permission and Section 77(3) consent for the change of use of the land (or

meeting the terms of The School Playing Fields General Disposal and Change of Use Consent (No 5) 2014.)

Legal and Financial Implications

The financial implications are set out at Appendix 'A' and are deemed to be Part II for the reason set out below:

This section of the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

Appendix 'A' is not for publication - Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.