

Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
Report submitted by: Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People

Date 7 November 2013

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Burnley Central East;
Burnley North East

Proposal to Enlarge Holly Grove School, Burnley

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Building Schools for the Future facilitated the building of the Burnley Campus which accommodates a range of partners. Since then, population increases and increases in demand for special education provision have meant that the accommodation is no longer large enough to accommodate current and planned future numbers on roll at both the special school and the primary school. This report requests permission to undertake stage 1 consultation to enlarge Holly Grove School.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools is recommended to approve the commencement of stage 1 consultation to enlarge Holly Grove School.

Background and Advice

Burnley Campus accommodates the following partners:

- Thomas Whitham Sixth Form College
- Barden Primary School
- Holly Grove School
- Reedley Hallows Nursery and Children's Centre
- Public Library
- Faith Centre

Barden Primary School, Holly Grove School and Reedley Hallows Nursery and Children's Centre are located in one wing of the campus. The building was designed to provide both dedicated and shared accommodation amongst these partners to facilitate transition from early years to primary and to provide inclusivity for children at Holly Grove School. The Sixth Form College is located in a separate wing of the

Campus and there are few practical opportunities for the sharing of accommodation other than the sports hall and the atrium.

Holly Grove School

Holly Grove School is established as a special school for children with general learning difficulties aged 2 – 11. It has an approved number of 50. The school was moved from its previous premises to the Burnley Campus with no change to its designation or size.

Pupil numbers at Holly Grove School have been well over 50 for a number of years, both before and after its move to the Burnley Campus. As at May 2013 the school had the following numbers on roll:

N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2	6	7	10	9	12	10	9	65

At the end of the summer term 2013, the school had 66 pupils on roll.

Due to the lack of accommodation at the Burnley Campus, the school has to teach in larger class sizes than desirable; has few opportunities to withdraw pupils; and has not got the use of some specialist facilities that it requires. Because of the overcrowded conditions at the Burnley Campus, there are also timetabling difficulties around some of the shared accommodation.

Holly Grove School has the demand to admit more pupils and has had to refuse entry to some pupils recently due to the accommodation difficulties. It is envisaged that this demand will continue in the future and it is suggested that the school should have a revised approved number of 70 with effect from 1 September 2014. In order to accommodate current and future pupil numbers, the accommodation at the school will need to be enlarged.

Barden Primary School

The former Barden Infant and Junior departments were amalgamated to form a 350 place primary school with effect from September 2007. At the time of the amalgamation and the designing of the Burnley Campus, falling primary school rolls were anticipated and it was envisaged that the school would have an admission number of 50.

However, demand for school places at Barden Primary remained buoyant and the school retained its admission number of 60. Pupil numbers at May 2013 are as follows:

R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
60	60	60	59	61	57	55	412

Future pupil numbers in the Burnley area are difficult to predict due to high migration and a fluctuating birth rate. For the September 2012 intake, most schools in the central Burnley area were full and there are no indications of a sustained decline in

primary numbers in the near future. In addition, there are high parental preferences for Barden Primary School and an admission number of 60 provides fewer challenges around class organisation than the intended admission number of 50. It is suggested, therefore, that the admission number of the school should remain at 60 and that the accommodation at the school should reflect this.

Reedley Hallows Nursery

Reedley Hallows Nursery has capacity for 60 full-time equivalent children and is oversubscribed every year. Although full, there is no requirement to expand the nursery. However, its accommodation will need to be considered as part of the redesign of the premises to allow both Holly Grove School and Barden Primary School to have sufficient space for current and planned numbers on roll, whilst retaining the correct amount of space for the nursery and children's centre.

Consultations

The headteachers of Holly Grove School, Barden Primary and Reedley Hallows Nursery and Children's Centre have been consulted about the accommodation issues at the campus. There is agreement that a holistic approach to the accommodation issues needs to be taken in order to provide the three partners with sufficient and suitable accommodation.

Statutory consultation is required to enlarge Holly Grove School from 50 to 70 places.

The consultation process will involve the production of a consultation document that will be available in printed form and on-line with opportunities to respond in writing or on line. There will also be at least one open evening, if required, for parents, staff and other members of the public to attend to ask questions and put forward views. The open evening will be attended by Lancashire County Council officers and be in the form of a 'drop in' event where people can come and talk to officers on a one to one or small group basis.

The outline process for the consultation is set out below:

Action	Timescale
Stage 1 Consultation on the proposal to enlarge Holly Grove School.	18 November 2013 to 20 December 2013
Report to Cabinet Member on the responses to the consultation	February 2014
Publish Statutory Notices and hold representation period	March / April 2014
Decision	May 2014
Implementation	1 September 2014

Statutory consultation is not required to enlarge the premises of Barden Primary School.

Capital costs

The most cost effective method of enlarging the Barden Campus is likely to involve building additional accommodation for Barden Primary which will release existing accommodation, much of it already equipped with specialist fixtures and fittings, for Holly Grove School.

The capital costs of the project will be funded by the Schools Capital Programme and financial contributions from Barden Primary School and Holly Grove School. Early estimated costs of the full expansion programme are £2.2million. This will be funded £1.8m from the existing capital programme and £0.4m contributions from partners for additional accommodation over the LCC offer.

A more detailed report on the costs of the project will be made available prior to determination of the programme, including the agreed contributions from Barden Primary School and Holly Grove School.

Whilst the number of pupils will increase at Holly Grove School, the increase is not large (66 pupils currently on roll compared to a proposed new approved number of 70). An Invest to Save case could be made to supplement the costs to the schools capital programme but the funding available from Schools Forum is limited and it is expected that another project to enlarge a special school will come forward in the near future which will utilise the full amount available.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

There are legal risks associated with not formally designating Holly Grove School for the number of pupils it is providing for, and there are financial risks associated with not increasing the number of SEN places available within Lancashire maintained provision. Both are outlined below.

Legal

If the provision at the school is not formally designated for the correct number of pupils, there is a risk that the school may be required to reduce pupil numbers in the future to its current approved number of 50.

Financial

The proposal represents a small potential increase in the number of pupils on roll at Holly Grove School (compared to the numbers that are actually on roll). The school has recently had to refuse entry to some pupils because of accommodation difficulties. These pupils will represent a cost to either the County Council's budget in terms of increased travel to alternative schools, or the dedicated schools grant (DSG) if the pupils had to be placed in non LCC maintained provision. The small increase in pupil numbers at the school is, therefore, likely to represent a saving to the local authority and the DSG.

The capital costs of the project will be met from the existing Capital Programme provision and contributions as outlined in the report.

Equality and Diversity

The proposal, if approved, will improve the physical environment for pupils with special educational needs by providing the recommended space according to area guidelines, together with appropriate specialist facilities. A full Equality Impact Assessment, including a SEN Improvement Test will be completed and reported at the determination stage of the proposal.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A