

Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
Report submitted by Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People
Date: 7 April 2015

Part I - Item No.

Electoral Divisions affected: Chorley North; Chorley Rural West; Leyland Central;
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**Stage 2 Report on the Proposal to Expand Primrose Hill Primary School,
Euxton**
(Appendices 'A' to 'C' refer)

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Executive Summary

Between 19 January 2015 and 13 February 2015 the authority consulted on a proposal to permanently expand Primrose Hill Primary School in Euxton, Chorley, with effect from September 2016. Under the statutory process, the authority is now required to consider the responses to the consultation and to decide whether to proceed to the next stage and publish Statutory Notices of the proposal. The purpose of this report is to provide the information necessary for that decision to be taken.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools is recommended:

- (i) to note the consultation arrangements which were undertaken and the responses that were received in respect of the authority's proposal; and
- (ii) to give approval to the authority publishing a Statutory Notice of its proposal to expand Primrose Hill Primary School, Euxton, by increasing the number of reception pupils admitted to the school from 30 to 60 from September 2016.

Background and Advice

As a result of the rising birth rate in the Euxton area, coupled with the effect of significant housing development in the area, intake into primary schools is expected to increase over the foreseeable future. In response, a Basic Need expansion scoping exercise was carried out in the area during mid-2014. Following this exercise and after consultation with primary schools in the Euxton area, it was concluded that Primrose Hill Primary School offered the most appropriate location for

school expansion to meet the long-term shortfall in the area. The school has been over-subscribed for at least the past 4 years and has achieved an 'Outstanding' rating in its last Ofsted inspection.

A separate report on the proposal to provide further additional places to accommodate an increasing need for places on Buckshaw Village is also to be considered by the Cabinet Member.

As reported to the Cabinet Member in January 2015, a permanent need for at least 47 additional primary places in 2017 has been identified for the Euxton area. Pupil projections indicate that demand for primary school places in this area will increase significantly in future years, as a result of local housing development.

Consequently, on 4 December 2014, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools approved a temporary increase in the admission number of Primrose Hill Primary School to 60 for September 2015 only. Furthermore, on 12 January 2015, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools approved the consultation on a proposal to permanently expand Primrose Hill Primary School to admit 30 additional pupils to each reception year from 2016 onwards. If the permanent expansion is approved the capacity of the primary school will increase from 210 to 420 by increasing the admission number from 30 to 60. Should the permanent expansion be approved, then additional permanent accommodation will be provided on the existing site; subject to planning consent being granted.

The Consultation Process

For a proposal to permanently expand a maintained primary school there is a statutory process which the authority, as the proposer, must follow.

The outline process for the consultation is set out below:

Action	Timescale
Stage 1 consultation on the proposal to enlarge the Primary School.	19 January 2015 to 13 February 2015
Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools on the responses to the consultation and permission to publish notices	Current stage
Publish Statutory Notices	April 2015
Representation period	April/May 2015 (4 weeks)
Decision	July 2015

The following are the statutory requirements around consultation as set out within Department for Education (DfE) guidance 'School Organisation: Maintained Schools. Guidance for Proposers and Decision Makers' and evidence of the authority's compliance with each requirement:

(Para 11) It is best practice for proposers to (a) allow adequate time; (b) provide

sufficient information for those being consulted to form a considered view on the matters on which they are being consulted; (c) make clear how their views can be made known; and (d) be able to demonstrate how they have taken into account the views expressed during consultation in reaching any subsequent decision as to the publication of proposals.'

Arrangements: (a) a consultation period was held from 19 January 2015 to 13 February 2015; (b) the consultation document (Appendix A) provided full details of the proposal and a consultation event was held at the school on 27 January 2015 for parents, staff, governors and other interested parties; (c) Pages 5 & 9 of the consultation document (Appendix 'A') provided information on how to make views known (d) this report provides an analysis of views expressed which will be taken into account prior to making a decision as to the publication of proposals. All written comments received will also be available in the Member's Retiring Room for further scrutiny.

(Para 10) It is best practice to provide a list of those to be consulted.

Arrangements: A list of all those that have been consulted appears in the consultation booklet (Appendix 'A' page 8)

(Para 10) It is best practice to consult pupils on any proposed changes to local school provision that may affect them.

Arrangements: Pupils' views were invited through the consultation arrangements and the questionnaire that consultation respondents were invited to complete. 150 questionnaires were completed, by pupils in years 2 to 6. In addition, Year 6 pupils at the school carried out a school project on the expansion proposal, resulting in a number of pupil letters being sent to Lancashire County Council. The summary of these responses to the consultation questionnaire is given at Appendix 'B'.

(Para 11) It is for proposers to decide what their consultation arrangements will be and, for example, whether to hold public meetings. It is recommended that consultation should be held during term time.

Arrangements: Consultation documents were provided (Appendix 'A') which were widely circulated. Furthermore, a consultation event was held at the school on the 27 January 2015. Consultation was held for a 4 week period during term time. A summary of the responses is given at Appendix 'C'.

Consultation Responses

The consultation document asked whether people supported the expansion of Primrose Hill Primary School, to increase the number of pupils admitted to reception year at the school from 30 to 60 with effect from September 2016.

All responses received, together with the notes of the public consultation event, have been placed on a file available in the Members' Retiring Room.

A total of 55 responses were received. All responses received were via completion (either manually or on-line) of the questionnaire provided.

Of the 55 responses, the following information was obtained with regard to the view as to whether or not there was support for the proposal to expand the school:-

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Totals
21	12	2	5	15	55

Of the 55 respondents, 53(96%) gave a reason for their response and 2 others (4%) gave no reason.

The responses came from the following categories of people with an interest in the school:

27 (49%) from parent/guardian of pupils currently attending Primrose Hill Primary School;

6 (11%) from parent/guardian of potential future pupils of Primrose Hill Primary School;

8 (15%) from members of staff at Primrose Hill Primary School;

5 (9%) from a member of staff and governor at Primrose Hill Primary School;

1 (2%) from a school governor at another school;

6 (11%) from an interested member of the local community;

1 (2%) from Whittle Le Woods Parish Council;

1 (2%) from a local nursery provider.

Support

From the responses, the following comments were received:-

Of the 33 respondents (60%) that agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to expand Primrose Hill Primary School, two did not provide a reason. Of those who gave a reason:

- 12 of the respondents felt that the expansion was an opportunity at the school that will bring about real benefit for the children;
- 6 of the respondents said that it would allow more children to have the opportunity to attend the school;
- 4 of the respondents said they supported the proposal because the school has a friendly, forward thinking ethos;
- 5 of the respondents felt that it was important that all children are able to access a high standard of education locally;
- 3 of the respondents felt that it would allow more children to access an outstanding school;
- 4 of the respondents felt that the school is well placed to take additional pupils;
- 3 of the respondents felt that the expansion would be good for the pupils;
- 3 of the respondents supported the proposal because additional places are required in Euxton;

- 2 of the respondents felt that more places were needed in the community and the expansion would create more jobs;
- 2 of the respondents said that the expansion would give the staff and governors the opportunity to serve the wider community;
- 2 of the respondents said they looked forward to the new facilities being provided;
- 2 of the respondents felt that attending a larger primary school would better prepare pupils for secondary school;
- 2 of the respondents felt that children should not have to travel long distances to access school places;
- 1 of the respondents felt that the expansion would address the lack of space at the school; and
- Other positive responses relates to general statements of support for the expansion.

Opposition

From the 20 responses (36%) that disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to expand Primrose Hill Primary School, the following reasons were provided:

- 13 of the respondents felt that the small school, friendly atmosphere would be lost if the school was expanded;
- 13 of the respondents had concerns about parking at busy times;
- 12 of the respondents had concerns about increased traffic and congestion;
- 5 of the respondents felt that a new school should be established on Buckshaw Village;
- 4 of the respondents had concerns about class sizes and facilities at the school;
- 3 of the respondents felt that doubling the size of the school might result in reduced standards; and
- 1 of the respondents felt that the expansion would only address demand from Buckshaw Village.

Response

The head teacher and governors are committed to ensuring that the increase in the number of pupils will not make the school feel 'too large' for pupils. The size of individual classes will not increase as a result of the expansion, as a 60 admission number allows for 2 classes of 30 per year, compared with the current 1 class of 30.

The head teacher and governors are also committed to ensuring that the high standards achieved by the school are maintained.

An initial assessment carried out by the Environment Directorate of Lancashire County Council indicates that the site would be able to support the expansion.

A further report is to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools on the provision of additional primary places on Buckshaw Village for September 2016.

Parking and traffic issues will be considered as part of the Traffic Assessment which will be undertaken by a specialist consultant and submitted as part of the application for planning permission required for any permanent build.

Consultation event

As part of the period of consultation which ran from 19 January to 13 February 2015, an appointment-led consultation event was held at the school on 27 January 2015. The event received 15 appointment requests and was attended by 19 people. The appointments were predominantly with parents, although other attendees included the head and chair of governors of another local school; 2 local residents; and 2 representatives from Euxton Parish Council.

Notes of the comments made at the consultation event can be found in Appendix 'C'.

During the consultation event, support was expressed towards the proposal to expand the school. However, concerns regarding traffic and parking were expressed by the majority of attendees. Several suggestions were made about how these issues could be addressed. These were:

- Provide a bus to pick children up and deliver them to the school (proposed by 2 people)
- Purchase land at the side of the school to provide additional access (proposed by 2 people)

Additional concerns raised at the event included:

- The additional places are required to address demand from Buckshaw and additional provision on Buckshaw Village (including a new school) should have been considered (proposed by 5 people)
- An expanded school could lose its small school ethos
- Expansion could result in reduced standards

Response

The head teacher and governors are committed to ensuring that the increase in the number of pupils does not adversely impact upon the school's good standards or the ethos of the school.

Parking and traffic issues will be considered as part of the Traffic Assessment. If traffic management/mitigation measures are required following consultation with Highways engineers they would need to be included as part of the project.

A further report is to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools on the provision of additional primary places on Buckshaw Village for September 2016.

The Children's Consultation

During the week commencing 2 February 2015, the school consulted 150 pupils from years 2 to 6 on their views towards the proposed expansion of Primrose Hill Primary School.

The head teacher delivered an assembly regarding the proposal for the permanent expansion and shared all the information available. Pupils then went away and undertook discussions in class. Two year groups (Years 2 and 4) undertook detailed projects on this and linked it to their English units. They canvassed numerous groups and also engaged local groups where possible. The head teacher then delivered another assembly where he was 'hot seated', answering any questions that the pupils had.

Finally, all pupils went back to class and gave their opinion as to whether the expansion would be positive or negative.

Of the 150 pupils, 112 were in favour of the proposed expansion and 38 were opposed. The full children's consultation response is attached at Appendix 'B' and additional papers are provided in the Member's Retiring room for inspection, as detailed above.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Additional primary school places are required in the Euxton area, in order to meet the demand from the increasing birth rate and increased demand resulting from housing development. The authority must ensure that it fulfils its statutory obligations in respect of the provision of school places.

The consultation process had highlighted a small range of concerns around the impact of the expansion of Primrose Hill Primary School, mainly around potential traffic and parking issues. These issues will be considered as part of subsequent planning consultation if the Cabinet Member makes the final decision to proceed to expand the school.

Having considered the responses received as part of the consultation, it is recommended that a Statutory Notice is published to propose that Primrose Hill Primary School is expanded by increasing the number of reception pupils from 30 to 60 with effect from September 2016. The school accommodation will be increased to a capacity of 420 in order that the school will be able to admit up to 60 reception pupils per reception year.

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 that want one.

Providing additional places increases the overall capacity in the area and, if birth rates fall or planned housing development fails to materialise in the future, there may be surplus places, with the possibility that the impact may be felt greatest by one or a small number of neighbouring schools.

If the authority delays its statutory consultation or decision making in respect of the provision of primary school places in the Euxton area, there is a real risk that increased demand will lead to emergency action rather than planned additional places. Emergency action can be disruptive for both the affected school and the families involved in the primary allocation of places, and can impact negatively on the schools' capital programme.

The expansion of the school would be subject to planning permission being granted.

Educational Structure of the School

The school Governing Body is currently making decisions on how the school will arrange its teaching arrangements, with the objective of maintaining the school's high standards and ethos.

Legal and Financial Implications

The delivery of additional primary school places will require capital funding. The amount of £3.76 million has been identified within the current capital programme. The basic provision of places is the highest priority in terms of allocating capital funding.

Should the permanent expansion of the school be approved, the school would receive revenue funding assistance to reflect the fact that pupils would begin two terms before the increased numbers are reflected in the school budget. This funding will be assessed annually and provided for a period up to and not exceeding 7 years, to ensure that the school is not financially disadvantaged by the expansion.

Land and Property

The proposal can be delivered within the existing site, following the recent acquisition of an additional piece of land that adjoins the existing site.

Any development would be subject to all necessary approvals such as Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and planning consent.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
All consultation responses for the proposals to Primrose Hill Community Primary School	19 January 2015 to 13 February 2015	Provision Planning Team, Directorate for Children and Young People, 01772 531774

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A