

## Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

Report submitted by: Director Children's Services

Date 19 May 2015

### Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:  
Chorley North; Chorley  
Rural West; Leyland Central

## Proposed expansion of Trinity Church of England/Methodist Primary School, Chorley

(Appendices 'A' to 'D' refer)

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### Executive Summary

Between 19 January 2015 and 13 February 2015, the authority consulted on a proposal to permanently expand Trinity Church of England / Methodist Primary School in 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 agree to the authority publishing a Statutory Notice of its proposal to expand Trinity Church of England/Methodist Primary School, Buckshaw Village, Chorley by permanently increasing the number of reception pupils admitted to the school from 60 to 90 from September 2016, by utilising the second site secured on Buckshaw Village.

## Background and Advice

Trinity Church of England/Methodist Primary School, Buckshaw Village was established in September 2010 to cater for the large housing development known as Buckshaw Village, built on the former Royal Ordnance Factory site. It was established as a one form entry school with the intention to expand to two forms of entry as and when demand for increased places was evident. This demand became evident and from September 2013 the school expanded to take 60 pupils each year.

As part of the planning process for part of the development on Buckshaw Village known as Group One, a further site was secured on the village, for the provision of primary school places.

With the further development of Buckshaw Village it became apparent additional school places would be required. In July 2014, the Provision Planning Team undertook a survey on Buckshaw Village to gauge the demand for school places required in the near future. (Appendix 'D' refers).

In response to the demonstrable demand for places, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools approved the temporary expansion of Trinity Church of England / Methodist School from 60 to 90 pupils for September 2015 on 4 December 2014.

On 12 January 2015 the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools agreed that a period of consultation be undertaken to allow a permanent increase in Reception intakes from 60 to 90 from September 2016, initially on the existing school site to be followed by permanent build on the 'Group One' site.

## Consultations

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
Informal 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	<b>Current stage</b>
Stage 1: Publish Statutory Notices	June 2015
Stage 2: Representation period	June/July 2015 (4 weeks)
Stage 3: Decision	September 2015
Stage 4: Implementation	September 2016

The following are the statutory requirements 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) 10. Although there is no longer a prescribed 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alterations, there is a strong expectation on schools and LAs to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations. Schools will also need to ensure that they have the consent of the site trustees and other relevant religious authorities (where necessary).

**Arrangements:** A consultation period was held from 19 January 2015 to 13 February 2015. This included a consultation document (set out at Appendix 'A') which provided full details of the proposal. Pages 9 & 11 of the consultation document provided information on how to make views known. 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 Members' Retiring Room for further scrutiny. Page 8 of the consultation document provided a list of people and organisations who were consulted, which included relevant religious authorities.

Pupils' views were invited through the consultation arrangements and the questionnaire that consultation respondents were invited to complete. In addition, the children at the school were consulted via the School Council representatives and facilitated by the school. The summary of these responses is provided at Appendix 'B'.

(Para) 11. It is best practice to take timing into account when considering a significant change or prescribed alteration to a school. For example, by holding consultations and public meetings – either formal or informal – during term time, rather than school holidays. The location of any public and stakeholder meetings should also be planned to maximise response. The admissions cycle should also be taken into account, for changes that will impact on the school's admission arrangements.

**Arrangements:** A consultation event was held at the school on the 3 February 2015. Consultation was held for 4 weeks, which was during term time. A summary of the responses is provided at Appendix 'C'.

The admissions arrangements for the school are unaffected as the temporary admission numbers are already 90 for September 2015 and the proposal is that this will be made permanent with effect from September 2016.

## **Consultation Responses**

The consultation document asked whether people supported the expansion of Trinity Church of England/Methodist Primary School, to increase the number of pupils admitted to reception year at the school from 60 to 90 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 39 responses were received, 36 via completion (either manually or on-line) of the questionnaire provided; one individual email from a member of the public

broadly supporting the proposal but querying split site arrangements; one joint response from Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council fully supporting the proposal; and one joint response from the Association of Teachers & Lecturers undertaking to work together with all stakeholders.

Of the 39 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
16	8	4	2	9	39

Of the 39 respondents, 38 (97%) gave a reason for their response and 1 other (3%) gave no reason.

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

- 14 (36%) from members of staff at Trinity CE/Methodist Primary School;
- 13 (33%) from parents/carers of pupils currently attending Trinity CE/Methodist Primary School;
- 2 (5%) from parents/carers of potential future pupils of Trinity CE/Methodist Primary School;
- 2 (5%) from governors at Trinity CE/Methodist Primary School;
- 1 (3%) from a parent/guardian of a pupil currently attending another school (Lancaster Lane Primary)
- 1 (3%) from a grandparent of pupils currently attending Trinity CE/Methodist Primary School
- 1 (3%) from a parent of former pupils of Trinity CE/Methodist Primary School
- 1 (3%) from a teaching Trade Union (ATL)
- 2 (5%) from interested members of the local community
- 1 (3%) from a local Parish Council
- 1 (3%) did not state the nature of their interest

## Support

From the 24 respondents (62%) that agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to expand Trinity CE/Methodist Primary School, the following reasons were given:

- 12 respondents (six staff members, two governors, a parent of a current pupil, a parent of a future pupil, an interested member of the local community, and a local parish council) felt that more places were needed as Buckshaw Village is constantly expanding;
- Five respondents (a governor, a member of staff and three parents of future or former pupils) felt that insufficient places currently meant that people were still not able to get their children into the school despite living very close by;
- Five respondents (four members of staff and one parent of a current and a future pupil) felt that the proposal would enable the provision of a quality, locally based education for Buckshaw Village children;

- Four members of staff observed that the school has already undergone an expansion and so has proven that the skills and experience are there to manage further growth;
- Two respondents (both staff members) observed that the expansion of the school would create additional local job opportunities;
- Two members of staff observed that the proposals would benefit the community
- One respondent (a member of staff) raised the school's excellent relationship with pupils and strong ethics in support of expansion

In addition, two respondents who were positive about the proposal did raise concerns about traffic and parking on the existing site. A further respondent also agreed with the proposal in principle but felt that there was insufficient information about split site arrangements and asked whether the additional intake could be fitted into the existing site if the new building was not available until 2017.

## **Opposition**

From the 11 respondents (28%) who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal the following reasons were given:

- Seven respondents (all parents/guardians of current pupils) were not comfortable with the idea of a split site;
- Four parents/guardians of current pupils asked why we did not just build an entirely new school;
- Four respondents (also all parents/guardians of current pupils) felt that the school was already too large and that instances of bullying and poor communication were increasing as a result;
- Three parents/guardians of current pupils were concerned about further disruption to current pupils following close on from a previous building project and the danger of compromising the children's education and reducing quality of teaching;
- Two parents of current pupils preferred a smaller school;
- Two parents of current pupils were concerned about traffic and parking issues at the existing site;
- Two respondents (parents of current pupils) felt that expansion should not take place until any new building was constructed and ready for occupation in order to avoid overloading the current site in the meantime;
- One parent of a current pupil expressed concern about the ability of either site to provide facilities for full school activities;
- One parent of a current pupil was concerned about increased numbers of inexperienced staff arising from a growing school;
- One parent of a child at another school was against the expansion of a faith school in principle and felt additional places should be provided at community schools instead;
- One parent of a current pupil was critical of the LEA for not anticipating the level of demand and suggested we plan better in future and another parent expressed the opinion that the impact of the size of the residential development had been poorly thought through.

In addition, one respondent who disagreed with the proposal raised a concern that the increased demand would not be sustained over the next ten years. This issue was also raised by one of the respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed.

Another parent raised concerns about provision of High School places following on from the Primary demand.

### Response

The Headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring that the school feels like one school and is perceived as such, however it is organised. The School are also mindful of the concerns of a split site school for parents and will do what it can to support them.

The split site arrangement is necessary because the existing site is not large enough to accommodate an additional form of entry. The Headteacher and Governors will seek to make any split site arrangements as smooth as possible for parents and pupils at the school.

The authority has proposed the expansion of an existing school rather than establish a new school, in accordance with the published [Strategy for the Provision of School Places and Schools' Capital Investment](#) which states Lancashire County Council will seek to provide additional places, when needed, at existing schools that provide outstanding or good standards of education, as judged by Ofsted, wherever possible.

Through the consultation process, the Headteacher and school have been informed about the concerns regarding communication issues as the school increases in size, bullying and traffic problems at the existing site. The school Headteacher and governors are committed to addressing these concerns.

With the new school site located away from the existing site, the building works can take place without disrupting the existing pupils on the Unity Place site. An initial site assessment carried out by the County Council indicates that the new Group One site would be suitable to support the new school buildings.

When planning for school places, the authority has to be mindful of other surrounding schools. If places are introduced in an area before the places are required, this can impact on the viability of surrounding schools if pupils choose to attend the new school. The school is being expanded to address the shortfall in primary school aged pupils.

The authority also plans for secondary school aged pupils and is addressing a shortfall in secondary places in the Chorley area.

Parking will be considered as part of the Traffic Risk Assessment which will be conducted as part of the application for planning permission required for any permanent build.

## **Neither in support nor in opposition**

Four respondents to the consultation either stated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal or stated no preference.

One of these was the teaching Trade Union – the ATL – which was simply responding to confirm that it would seek to work with stakeholders regardless of the outcome.

Of the other three responses, one was from a parent of a current pupil who expressed concerns that the school was already becoming too large and about the split site. Another was from a grandparent of a current pupil who felt there was insufficient information regarding split site arrangements and also asked why a brand new school was not built. The third was from a parent of a current pupil who did not support a split site and was unconvinced that the level of demand was sustainable beyond ten years.

### Response

The Headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring that the school feels like one school and is perceived as such however it is organised. The School are also mindful of the concerns of a split site school for parents and will do what it can to support them.

### **Consultation event**

As part of the period of consultation which ran from 19 January 2015 to 13 February 2015, an appointment-led consultation event was held at the school on 3 February 2015. Five people booked appointments to visit officers, however only three interested parties attended the event.

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

### **The Children's Consultation**

In order to obtain the views of children at the school, the school asked all classes to hold a discussion on the proposal to expand to a 3 form of entry, split site school. Representatives of each class gave written / verbal feedback to the Headteacher. The school reported it was very difficult for the children to separate out whether they were in favour or not of the expansion from their understandable questions, queries and enquiries about how the school would operate over two sites and the implications for them and their families. Of the comments made by each representative, the Headteacher estimated the positive comments outweighed the negative comments 9 to 1. The full summary of the children's consultation response is attached at Appendix 'B'.

### **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 to address new families moving on to

the Buckshaw Village development. The authority must ensure that it fulfils its statutory obligations in respect of the provision of school places.

Having considered the responses received as part of the consultation, it is recommended that a Statutory Notice is published to propose that Trinity Church of England / Methodist Primary School is expanded by increasing the number of reception pupils from 60 to 90 with effect from September 2016. The school accommodation will be increased to a capacity of 630, initially by utilising temporary accommodation on the existing site but followed by the provision of a permanent build on the 'Group One' site, in order that the school will be able to admit up to 90 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 pupils arising from families moving on to Buckshaw Village 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.

### **Educational Structure of the School**

In January 2014 the Department for Education released guidance on the Organisation of Maintained Schools. Within this document was advice for schools expanding on to an additional site. Proposers need to ensure that the new provision is genuinely a change to an existing school and not a new school.

This proposal is for the expansion of Trinity Church of England/ Methodist school, not the establishment of a new school.

The school Governing Body is currently making decisions on how the school will arrange its teaching groups across the two sites.

### **Legal and Financial Implications**

The delivery of additional primary school places will require capital funding. The basic provision of places is the highest priority in terms of allocating capital funding



and previous capital allocations and processes indicate that funding would be available for this type of project. It is anticipated that a project to build the additional school site will cost in the region of £3.8 to £4.3 million, depending on the decision on how the school wishes to operate across the split site. This funding has been identified within the current capital programme.

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 cannot be delivered within the existing site.

An additional site on Buckshaw Village for a new one Form of Entry school has been secured via a Section 106 agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The parties to this agreement are Chorley Borough Council and Persimmon (the housing developer on the site). At the time of writing, the local authority is seeking a deed of variation to the S106 agreement to enable the expansion of an existing school onto the site before the land can be transferred to Lancashire County Council.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
All consultation responses for the proposals to Trinity Church of England / Methodist Primary School	19 January 2015 to 13 February 2015	School Planning Team, 01772 538909

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A