

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 6 February 2020

Report of the Head of Service - Asset Management

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Preston South West;

Temporary Expansion of Primary Pupil Places in Preston Schools

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

Rachael Hamilton, Tel: (01772) 535505, Capital Programme Principal,
rachael.hamilton@lancashire.gov.uk

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 Preston planning area and recommends that additional places be made available at Lea Community 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 year intake of Lea Community Primary School in North West Preston, from 30 to 60 places for September 2020, to be accommodated within the existing building.
- (ii) Approve the funding set out at Appendix 'A' in order to make internal alterations to the building to accommodate the additional numbers.

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.

The North and West Preston Planning Areas have been identified together as an area of growth, due to the significant level of housing development planned in the area as part of the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal.

The table below shows demand in the combined area, based on the number of recorded births:

		Forecast intake based on births only				
	Total Published Admission Number	Sept 2019 (actual)	Sept 2020	Sept 2021	Sept 2022	*Sept 2023
Reception Places	911	875	928	893	791	791

*this is based on an assumption that the birth rate remains the same because the relevant birth data is not available yet.

The table shows the expected intakes for the North and West primary schools, based on recent admissions to the schools, when compared with the corresponding birth rates 4 years earlier.

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:

		Forecast intake (Births and Housing Projections)				
	Total Published Admission Number	Sept 2019 (actual)	Sept 2020	Sept 2021	Sept 2022	Sept 2023
Reception Places	911	875	941	919	828	841

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

However, the position for 2021 and 2022 is less clear. Whilst plans were originally being made to provide permanent places in the area, the latest birth data for 2016/17

and 2017/18 provided by the Office of National Statistics showed a reduction in the birth rate, meaning that demand for 2021 and 2022 intakes will be smaller, even with the addition of the yield from new housing.

Given both the significant birth rate drop for the 2022 intake (and without data to show the birth rate beyond the 2022 intake at this point), and with housing build rates being slower than anticipated, together with the fact that a number of schools in the immediate vicinity are currently carrying spare places, it is proposed that the additional places for 2020 be provided on a temporary basis at this stage, until further data is available to evidence the need for permanent places. This will be kept under review.

On identification of the area as a hotspot, all schools within the area of growth were contacted in order to seek expressions of interest in expansion, and 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 to accommodate additional pupil numbers;
- Access to the site and proximity to the area of growth.

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

- Expressed an interest to expand;
- Fit the criteria above and;
- Could provide the amount of additional places required for the area.

Permanent expansion of schools in the area was also considered and feasibility studies were undertaken for the permanent expansion of Lea Community Primary School and two other schools in the area. Of the three schools, the scheme at Lea was the most favourable in terms of cost and practicality. At the current point in time, pupil numbers in the area do not indicate that a permanent expansion is required, although this may change in the future. The proposed alterations for the temporary expansion at Lea Community Primary School have been designed to support a permanent expansion in the future, should this become necessary.

Consultations

The headteacher and governing body of Lea Community Primary School have been consulted on the proposals and an increase to the Published Admission Number for September 2020 is supported.

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 county council 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 permanent places increases the overall capacity in the school planning areas and, if birth rates fail to yield the expected number of pupils, or there is an increased level of outward migration of families from this area, there may be surplus places.

Property Asset Management

The expansion of Lea Community Primary School can be accommodated within the existing school building. A feasibility assessment has been carried out for the proposed expansion.

Legal

Lancashire County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.

The governing body has been consulted in line with the Schools Admissions Code 2014.

Financial

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).

Procurement

All Lancashire County Council procurement standing orders will be complied with. Contracts will be let through Lancashire County Council's approved frameworks.

Human Resources

The school may need to employ an additional teacher as a result of the temporary expansion in numbers. Should the proposals be approved, the school would receive revenue funding assistance for each year of expansion to reflect the fact that pupils would begin two terms before the increased numbers are reflected in the school budget. This funding would be provided through the Dedicated Schools Grant in

accordance with the rules agreed by the Lancashire Schools Forum. This will ensure that the school is not financially disadvantaged by the expansion.

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.