

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 4 March 2021

### Report of the Head of Service - Asset Management

#### Part I

Electoral Division affected:  
Burnley Central East;

#### Review of Accommodation at Burnley Campus – Phase One

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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#### Executive Summary

Burnley Campus was built in 2008 under the Private Finance Initiative programme: Building Schools for the Future. It provides accommodation for Barden Primary School, Holly Grove Primary School (Special Educational Needs), Reedley Hallows Nursery School, Burnley Campus Library, Reedley Hallows Children and Family Wellbeing Service, The Faith Centre and The Exchange in Burnley.

Following the closure of Thomas Whitham Sixth Form, the vacated accommodation at Burnley Campus needs to be reviewed and alternate use identified. The School Planning Strategy has identified the need for 30 additional primary school places, which can be met by the addition of a temporary form of entry for September 2021 at Barden Primary School.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability sufficiency strategy under priority 3 aims to ensure that all pupils with Education Health and Care Plans have access to mainstream education within their local community. Barden Primary School expressed an interest in providing a special educational needs unit, within their mainstream school setting, and the vacant former Thomas Whitham accommodation provides opportunity to establish one.

The SEND sufficiency strategy also identifies the need for more special school places within Lancashire to meet rising demand for places and to meet various priorities under the strategy. Holly Grove Primary School is currently over-subscribed for pupils requiring places in the special school, and the opportunity to provide additional accommodation using former Thomas Whitham space will enable the school to increase the number of special school places it can provide.

Following the phase one reorganisation of the educational partners on the campus and the Children and Family Wellbeing Service, a phase two review to address the impact on other services and to form a plan for the remaining accommodation is required.

Phase one of the Burnley Campus review sets out a reconfiguration of accommodation in order to meet these strategic requirements. An overview of the phase 1 reconfiguration and associated cost estimates is set out within the report.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C20 have been complied with. Compliance with Standing Order C19 was impractical as the project has expanded from that originally envisaged which, in turn, has impacted on the cost. The reason for this is that agreement needed to be reached with multiple stakeholders and further works are now required under phase 1 to future proof phase 2 works at the campus.

### **Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve the review of Burnley Campus, Phase 1.
- (ii) Approve the relocation of Reedley Hallows Nursery and Reedley Hallows Children and Family Wellbeing Service to part of the former Thomas Whitham accommodation.
- (iii) Approve the provision of additional places, for one year only in 2021, at Barden Primary School, through the addition of one classroom to the school.
- (iv) Approve the provision of a Special Educational Needs unit for Barden Primary School, located within the former Thomas Whitham accommodation.
- (v) Approve the provision of additional accommodation for Holly Grove Special School, increasing the building capacity by using the vacated Reedley Hallows nursery accommodation. This will allow the number of pupils to be increased in the future via further cabinet report.
- (vi) Approve the capital expenditure detailed in Appendix 'A' to deliver phase 1.

### **Background and Advice**

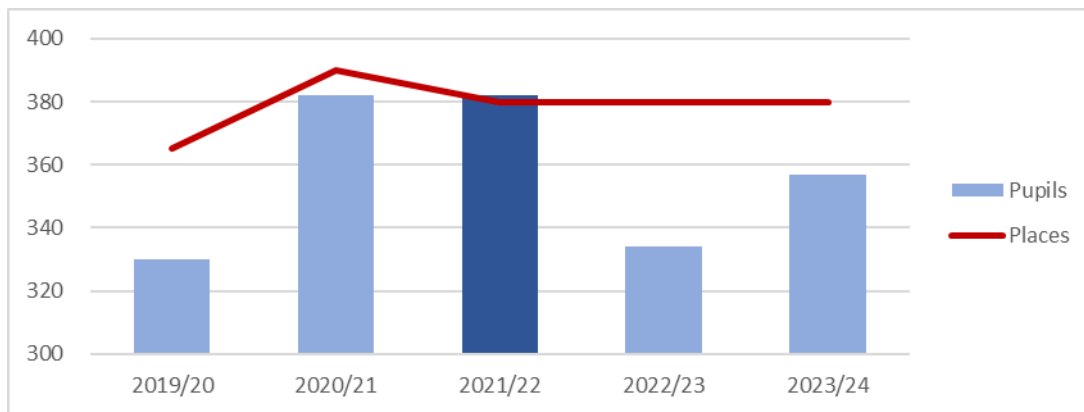
On 1 July 2019, Cabinet approved the closure of Thomas Whitham Sixth Form College with effect from 31 August 2020. Thomas Whitham was part of the Burnley Campus which also houses Barden Primary School, Holly Grove Special School and Reedley Hallows Nursery School, as well as a number of county council services including Reedley Hallows Children and Family Wellbeing Service, Burnley Campus Library, Faith Centre, and The Exchange, Burnley.

Following the closure of Thomas Whitham, a review of accommodation was carried out to understand how the surplus accommodation (6,700m<sup>2</sup>), formerly occupied by Thomas Whitham, could be utilised by existing campus partners or other services, which gave opportunity to other projects. Phase 1 reallocates 1,700m<sup>2</sup> of former Thomas Whitham accommodation to education providers and council services, with the remaining 5,000m<sup>2</sup> to be dealt with in later phases of the project.

### Primary School Places

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.

For 2021 only, there is a small forecast shortfall in primary school places, therefore a one-year bulge class needs to be provided in the North Burnley planning area. Although this is a small shortfall, with inward migration in Burnley, it is prudent to provide more places than required to allow for future pupil movement.



With the opportunity created via availability of accommodation within the Burnley Campus, Barden Primary School offered to take the additional pupils for 2021, via the provision of one additional classroom and internal works.

### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities places

Between 2014 and 2019, the number of children and young people with education, health and care plans rose by 47% nationally. In the same period, the number of children and young people educated in special schools and specialist colleges rose by 29%.

The SEND sufficiency strategy identifies a number of priorities, including priority 2: "to ensure that all children and young people with SEND have access to the right provision at the right time." As such, the council recently sought to establish additional special school places and special educational needs units within mainstream schools across Lancashire, and had been seeking expressions of interest from providers. The surplus accommodation at Burnley Campus gave rise to two key Inclusion projects, subject to Cabinet approval:

- to provide additional places at Holly Grove Special School; and

- to establish a special educational needs unit within Barden Primary School.

Neither of these schools can provide additional places without additional accommodation being provided to the schools. The redundant accommodation at Thomas Whitham provides the opportunity for these projects to proceed. However, a number of steps need to be co-ordinated, in order to make the accommodation available to the education providers.

The accommodation review work to date has identified a number of key steps in phase 1, which must happen in order to create additional space where it is required:

1. To move Reedley Hallows Nursery School from its existing location, into 550m<sup>2</sup> of the former Thomas Whitham accommodation, and to provide a new outdoor play area.
2. To relocate Reedley Hallows Children and Family Wellbeing Service from the primary wing, into 350m<sup>2</sup> of the former Thomas Whitham accommodation.
3. To use the former Reedley Hallows Nursery School and Reedley Hallows Children and Family Wellbeing Service accommodation to provide an additional 770m<sup>2</sup> to Holly Grove Special School, allowing them to place additional pupils in the future subject to cabinet approval.
4. To provide additional accommodation and internal works to Barden Primary School, to allow the addition of a one-year bulge class of 30 in 2021 only.
5. To provide additional accommodation to Barden Primary School, to allow the addition of a special educational needs unit within the former Thomas Whitham accommodation.

This is phase 1 of a review and reorganisation of accommodation at the campus, reallocating 1700m<sup>2</sup> of former Thomas Whitham accommodation. Once the first key steps are taken, there will be ongoing work to review how other campus partners are located within the building, and how to utilise the remaining 5000m<sup>2</sup> of the former Thomas Whitham accommodation. Further reports may be presented to Cabinet in the future, depending on the outcome of phase 1, which may include additional financial expenditure.

Financial estimates for the work are set out at Appendix 'A'. With the Burnley Campus being a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) building, operating by external management companies, there are likely to be increased costs to the works required over costs associated with a non-PFI building. As such, an allowance is made for additional costs due to the PFI constraints, and this is detailed within Appendix 'A'.

## **Consultations**

The provision of additional primary school places for 2021 is below the limit for a statutory process to be required (more than 30 pupils or greater than 25% capacity increase), so this proposal is therefore non-statutory and no consultation is required. The movement of the Reedley Hallows nursery to new accommodation does not affect the number of places offered and therefore does not require consultation.

The number of places being provided at Holly Grove is not yet finalised and subject to a separate cabinet report in the future. However, it is expected to be above

statutory consultation limits of 10% for special schools, meaning a consultation may be required to comply with Department for Education prescribed alterations.

### **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 birth numbers do not move into primary schools as forecast for the 2021 intake, or there is an increased level of outward migration of families from this area, there may be surplus places.

The SEND sufficiency strategy aims to be "providing children and young people with a good quality education and learning opportunity which matches their talents, ambitions and aims and enables a positive transition to adulthood". The risk of not providing additional places, at a time when need for SEND special school places is facing increased demand, is considerable.

### **Financial**

Should the temporary expansion of the Barden Primary School be approved, then the school would receive revenue funding assistance for one year, to reflect the fact that pupils would begin two terms before the increased numbers are reflected in the school budget. This funding will be provided through the Growth Funding, in accordance with the rules agreed by the Lancashire Schools Forum. This will ensure that the school is not financially disadvantaged by the expansion.

The Burnley campus building is a private finance initiative (PFI) building with external management interest; the steps involved in undertaking work at a PFI building comes with increased costs compared to work at a local authority owned building. Appendix 'A' sets aside an additional budget for the extra cost associated with works of this scale occurring within a PFI building and this will be funded from Basic needs grants in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Further 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
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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.