

Equality Analysis Toolkit

Morecambe Road School, Lancaster

For Decision Making Items

July 2022

Question 1 - What is the nature of and are the key components of the proposal being presented?

The proposal relates to the expansion of Morecambe Road School to create 34 additional places, 22 of these places would be based within the existing school site and 12 places would be based in a satellite provision at Lancaster and Morecambe College, which is located 0.3 miles away from Morecambe Road School. The separate 'satellite' provision would be operated as part of Morecambe Road School.

Morecambe Road School is a co-educational special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. It is also being proposed to redesignate Morecambe Road School as a school which meets the needs of children and young people with generic learning difficulties.

Question 2 - Scope of the Proposal

Is the proposal likely to affect people across the county in a similar way or are specific areas likely to be affected – e.g. are a set number of branches/sites to be affected?

The proposal may affect children and young people who currently attend Morecambe Road School as the proposal means there will be an increased number of pupils attending the school.

Question 3 – Protected Characteristics Potentially Affected

Could the proposal have a particular impact on any group of individuals sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation

- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status

And what information is available about these groups in the County's population or as service users/customers?

This proposal will have a particular impact on children and young people with disabilities and their families. Pupils will be within the age (younger people) protected characteristics group and are likely to meet the definition for the disability protected characteristics group.

Question 4 – Engagement/Consultation

How have people/groups been involved in or engaged with in developing this proposal?

This proposal is an element of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2019 to 2024. Final approval for this strategy was provided by Cabinet in October 2020 following a public consultation during the summer of that year. Lancashire residents were made aware of this through notifications on Lancashire County Council website, Twitter and Facebook websites, the Local Offer website and Facebook page and via the Parent Carer Forum. In addition, a letter was sent directly to each of the following stakeholders advising them of the consultation:

- POWAR
- Lancashire Parent Carer Forum chair
- Governing bodies, proprietors and principals of a range of educational providers including pre-school, school age and post-sixteen settings
- Children, Family and Well-being Service who have responsibility for children's centres
- Youth offending team
- Local Members of Parliament
- Diocesan/Church Authorities
- The Regional Schools Commissioner

The information relating to SEND provision, presented as part of this public consultation, was updated in June 2021. The updated information was shared with various stakeholders, including families and a range of education providers during a series of meetings that took place during the summer term 2021 and which included Local Area Partnership, head teacher update and Schools' Forum meetings.

In September 2021, Cabinet gave approval to seek expressions of interest for the initiation of feasibility studies and an informal consultation process, to expand and increase the numbers of school places in satellite provision, at both primary and secondary level for children and young people with learning difficulties in the north area of Lancashire.

Separate consultations were undertaken in relation to this specific proposal regarding the expansion of Morecambe Road School. Informal consultation was completed on 1 April 2022. This included an online survey and a public consultation meeting held in school on 31 March 2022. The proposed changes were raised at a meeting with special school heads in the local area on 25 March 2022.

The views of pupils have been collected separately within the school.

Approval was given by Cabinet on 5 May 2022 to undertake the formal consultation required to make prescribed alteration/significant change to the school, that is to expand the school to create 34 additional places.

The formal consultation included an online survey on the Council's 'Have your say' website. Statutory notices were published in the Lancashire Evening Post on 13 May 2022. A public consultation meeting was held at Morecambe Road School on 9 June 2022.

Only 2 responses were received to the invitation to provide feedback to proposal. While these responses were supportive of the proposal, any decision based on these results would need to be heavily caveated because of the very low response rate.

The formal consultation period included a meeting at Morecambe Road School for all interested parties on 9 June 2022, to which six parents/carers of children and young people who currently attend Morecambe Road School attended, together with three members of staff

from Lancaster and Morecambe College and two from Morecambe Road School. A representative from Lancashire Council also attended the event. All attendees provided positive feedback about the proposals. One parent sought reassurance that all the safeguarding policies and procedures were aligned between the school and college. Reassurance was given by the Head teacher at school and the Learner Support staff at College.

Question 5 – Analysing Impact

Could this proposal potentially disadvantage particular groups sharing protected characteristics and if so which groups and in what way? This pays particular attention to the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of protected characteristics;
- To advance equality of opportunity for those who share protected characteristics;
- To encourage people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life;
- To contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not/community cohesion;

It is anticipated that for the children and young people who are able to access the additional places at Morecambe Road School and the satellite provision at Lancaster and Morecambe College, if this is approved, the impact will be positive and their equality of opportunity will be advanced.

If this proposal is approved the ability for the children and young people to have links in their local community is likely to increase contributing both to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between communities and between the communities at Morecambe Road School and Lancaster and Morecambe College.

Question 6 –Combined/Cumulative Effect

Could the effects of this proposal combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

Other factors and decisions that might have a combined and/or cumulative effect include the redesign of the short breaks offer that is currently underway. This is a service that is provided for children and young people with disabilities, some of whom may attend the Morecambe Road School. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the short breaks offer as it has not been possible to provide all of the short break activities and day time and overnight breaks that are usually available. It is also not possible to foresee how provision in schools and in relation to short breaks will develop over time in the light of any changes that will need to be made in response to the pandemic.

Question 7 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis

As a result of the analysis has the original proposal been changed/amended, if so please describe.

The proposal has not been changed or amended.

Question 8 - Mitigation

Will any steps be taken to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal?

Steps will be taken to minimise any disruption due to the young people and school staff moving between the two sites.

Question 9 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors

This weighs up the reasons for the proposal – e.g. need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time – against the findings of the analysis.

The proposal is designed to have a positive overall impact on children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities as it reflects the overall objectives of the reforms that were introduced with the Children and Families Act 2014. Nationally there was 21.6% increase in demand for places in maintained special schools between 2015/16 and 2019/20; in Lancashire there was a 22.9% increase in demand over the same time period. In addition, there are on average 300 fewer SEN unit places in Lancashire in comparison with other authorities in England if they were the same size.

Families seek placements in private and independent special schools where specialist provision is not available within the maintained sector. This increases the demand on high needs block funding because for the main part special school places within the private and independent sector are more expensive. This proposal will increase the number of places available to children and young people within the north area of the county. It will support a more efficient use of the resources available to children and young people with special educational needs.

The number of pupils attending the school will increase although class size should not be affected.

Question 10 – Final Proposal

In summary, what is the final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The proposal remains to create 34 additional places, 22 of these places would be based within the existing school site and 12 places would be based in a satellite provision at Lancaster and Morecambe College, which is located 0.3 miles away from Morecambe Road School. The separate 'satellite' provision would be operated as part of Morecambe Road School.

The proposal also remains to redesignate Morecambe Road School as a school which meets the needs of children and young people with generic learning difficulties.

This proposal will enable the council to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to making the provision needed for a greater number of children and young people with special educational needs in the north area of the county.

Question 11 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements

What arrangements will be put in place to review and monitor the effects of this proposal?

The local authority is required to review the special educational provision and across the local area for children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities as part of its statutory duties. This can only be achieved by monitoring the changing needs of the local population of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and making sure the outcomes in education, health and care are being improved as a result of the provision being made. This is one of the primary functions of the SEND Partnership Board, which is a multi-agency group with representatives from across the local area including young people, parents and carers as well as commissioners and providers of education, health and care services. The SEND Partnership Board meets every two months. It is led by senior post holders from within the council and NHS, including the Executive Director of Education and Children's Service and the Joint Chief Officer within the NHS and reports directly to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

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Position/Role Inclusion Policy & Practice Development Officer/Equality & Cohesion Manager

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Service Head

Decision Signed Off By

Cabinet Member or Director

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