

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 8 June 2023

Report of the (Acting) Director of Education, Culture and Skills

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Skelmersdale Central;
Skelmersdale East;
Skelmersdale West; West
Lancashire East; West
Lancashire North; West
Lancashire West;

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Strategy Implementation - Proposal to Expand Kingsbury Primary School, Skelmersdale
(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

Dr Sally Richardson, Tel: 07920086432, Head of Inclusion,
sally.richardson@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

Final approval is being sought on the proposal to create additional special school places at Kingsbury Primary School, Skelmersdale, through an expansion of the school.

This proposal forms part of the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Strategy 2019–2024, agreed by Cabinet in October 2020. Previous proposals have focussed on other areas of the County, however, there has been a significant increase in demand for special school places in all areas of the County in 2022. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Strategy is currently being reviewed.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the requirements of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to consider the results of the formal consultation, and give final approval to increase the number of special school places at Kingsbury Primary School, Skelmersdale, by 30 places to 120, which will be created through additional teaching spaces on the school site.

Detail

In September 2022, Cabinet approved the initiation of a feasibility study and informal consultation to increase the number of places at Kingsbury Primary School.

The school is proposing to create additional teaching space by installing modular buildings on the main school site. The school is funding the cost of this expansion in its entirety and there are therefore no costs to the county council.

The informal consultation period ended 13 November 2022. Twelve of the thirteen responses received strongly agreed with the proposal to expand the school. One respondent disagreed with the proposal; no information was provided about the reasons for this. In January 2023, Cabinet considered the results of the informal consultation and approved the publication of the statutory notice and initiation of the formal consultation.

The formal consultation began on 28 March 2023 and ended on 11 May 2023; this period of consultation included a public meeting in the school on 25 April 2023.

The proposals for an increase in special school places at Kingsbury Primary School have been shared with external partner agencies and other local authority services. Developments in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Strategy have also been shared through the SEND Partnership Board.

Consultations

A total of five responses were received to the formal consultation in relation to the proposal to increase the number of places at Kingsbury Primary School. 100% of the respondents strongly agreed with the proposal. Comments received included the need for additional special school places in the area, to enable children to be placed in appropriate provision.

A breakdown of the responses has not been provided, on the basis that the small number of responses means that it may be possible to identify individuals from the responses made.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification it is summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.



Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Equality Impact Assessment

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The county council and partners across education, health and care are required to work together to plan for and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2014.

If the decision was not to proceed with the proposals contained within the report, the risk would be insufficient places and potential for increased costs out of area. This proposal mitigates the risk of this and the county council failing in its duty to provide sufficient school places.

Property Asset Management

All works are being funded from within Kingsbury Primary School's own resources and managed by the school.

Financial

The expansion at Kingsbury Primary School requires no capital commitment from the capital programme.

By increasing the county council's internal Special School Provision, this will enable progress to be made towards keeping up with the demand for special school places and reducing reliance on the use of independent school placements which present a growing pressure on high needs block funding.

The demand increased by 10.7% in 2022 in comparison with 2021. Prior to this, the average increase in demand has been 8% per year. The indicative funding allocations for the High Needs Block are expected to increase by 3% per year. This is likely to increase the gap between expenditure and funding over the next few years. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities sufficiency work is being carried out to address these issues, and to prevent Lancashire County Council going into a High Needs Deficit Position. The additional internal places created will therefore help to support the growing financial pressures on the High Needs Budget.

Equality and Cohesion

The Equality Impact Assessment is set out at Appendix 'A'.

This proposal impacts on both the age (young people) and disability protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and is designed to contribute positively to the Public Sector Equality Duty's general aim of advancing equality of opportunity and its



related aim of increasing participation in public life for these children and young people, their families and carers.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

