

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 11 July 2024

Report of the Director of Education, Culture and Skills

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
Lancaster Central; Lancaster
Rural East; Lancaster Rural
North; Wyre Rural Central;
Wyre Rural East;

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;

SEND Sufficiency Strategy Implementation – Provision of Additional Special School Places at Bleasdale School, Silverdale, Carnforth
(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

This report includes the results of a formal consultation to create additional special school places at Bleasdale School, Silverdale through an increase in provision on the main school site, and to redesignate Bleasdale School as a school which meets the needs of children and young people with generic learning difficulties.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the requirements of Standing Order C18 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Consider the results of the formal consultation and give final approval to increase the number of special school places at Bleasdale School, Silverdale by 14 places from 40 to 54, which will be created through increasing the number of places available on the main school site throughout different year groups.

- (ii) Subject to (i) above, approve the change in designation of Bleasdale School



from one for pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties, to one for pupils with generic learning difficulties.

Detail

This report proposes the development of more specialist provision in the Lancashire North area for children with special educational needs and disabilities, in view of the continuing increase in demand for this type of provision.

School expansion

An increase in the number of special school places available is proposed at Bleasdale School by 14, from 40 to 54. The increase would be achieved over-time, through the creation of additional places in existing classes on the main school site.

Change in school designation

Bleasdale School is currently designated as a school for children and young people with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. The type and level of severity of special needs for which Bleasdale School makes provision is no longer reflected in the current designation. It is therefore proposed that Bleasdale School is redesignated as a school for children and young people with generic learning difficulties.

Consultation

The informal consultation was carried out between 30 April 2024 and 15 May 2024. A public meeting was held in school on 7 May 2024. The responses to the informal consultation were considered by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in May 2024, and it was agreed that the formal consultation could proceed.

The statutory notice was published, and the formal consultation was carried out between 22 May 2024 and 26 June 2024. A public meeting was held in school on 11 June 2024.

The formal consultation was conducted in accordance with the statutory guidance for making prescribed alterations to schools which has been provided by the Department for Education.

There were no responses to the formal consultation.

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

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'	Bleasdale School, Equality Impact Analysis

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

The county council has a legal duty to ensure adequate provision is made for pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Financial

High needs funding within the dedicated schools grant supports provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This revenue funding enables local authorities and education providers to meet their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014.

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 the revenue-high needs block funding.

This expansion of Bleasdale School requires no capital commitment from the capital programme.

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 only mitigates some of the risk of this and the county council failing in its duty to provide sufficient school places and risk to reputational damage of the county council.

There would also be a continued risk to a considerable overspend on the revenue-high needs block funding as places would have to be sought in the independent sector at considerable cost to the local authority.

Equality and Cohesion

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.

The proposed increase in provision available in Lancashire will improve what is available for Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

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

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None		
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
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