

Equality Analysis Toolkit

Bleasdale School, Silverdale, Carnforth

For Decision Making Items

June 2024



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

The proposal relates to the expansion of Bleasdale School through an increase of provision on the main school site from 40 to 54 places.

Bleasdale School is a co-educational special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is proposed to redesignate Bleasdale 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 who currently attend Bleasdale School as the proposal means there will be an increased number of pupils attending the school with generic learning difficulties.

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 May 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 December 2023, Cabinet approved the initiation of an informal consultation process to increase the number of places special school places available throughout the County.

An informal consultation was carried out at between 30 April 2024 and 15 May 2024. This included an online survey between those dates and a public consultation meeting which was held at Bleasdale School on 7 May 2024. A member of staff from Lancashire County Council also attended the meeting.

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 required to make prescribed alteration/significant change to the school could proceed.

The formal consultation began on 22 May 2024 and ended on 26 June 2024 and included an online survey between those date on the Council's 'Have your say' website. Statutory notices were published in the Lancashire Evening Post on 22 May 2024. A public consultation meeting was held on 11 June 2024 at Bleasdale School. A member of staff from Lancashire County Council attended.

There were no responses to the formal consultation.

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 many pupils and more widely for children and young people who are able to access the additional provision at Bleasdale School, 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 to advancing equality of opportunity.

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?

Procedures will continue to be monitored and revised as appropriate to ensure best practice.

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 any increase in traffic.

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 is an increase in demand for places in maintained special schools; in Lancashire between 2017 and 2022 there was a 28 % increase in demand.

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.

Question 10 – Final Proposal

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

The proposal remains to expand Bleasdale School through an increase of provision on the main school site for 40 – 54. This will be achieved over-time, through existing classes on the main school site. The class sizes at Bleasdale school are currently smaller than the national average and smaller than those of other Lancashire special schools.

The proposal also remains to redesignate Bleasdale 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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