

**Report to the Cabinet**

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 5 September 2024

**Report of the Director of Education, Culture and Skills**

**Part I**

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

**Corporate Priorities:**  
Caring for the vulnerable;

**SEND Sufficiency Strategy Implementation - Provision of Special Educational Needs Units in Mainstream Schools**

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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**Brief Summary**

This report includes the results of the formal consultations to create Special Educational Needs Units at Carnforth Community Primary School, North Road, Carnforth; Clayton Brook Primary School, Great Greens Lane, Clayton Brook, Bamber Bridge, Preston; and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Cedar Road, Chorley.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the requirements of the council's Cabinet procedure rules (Standing Order C18, Consideration of Key Decisions) have been complied with.

**Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Consider the results of the formal consultations following the publication of the statutory proposal and approve the creation of Special Educational Needs Units within Carnforth Community Primary School, Clayton Brook Primary School and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School.
- (ii) Subject to (i) above, approve the funding for building alterations/adaptations and/or acquisition of resources or necessary expenditure.



## Detail

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

Providing Special Educational Needs units across the county, rather than creating more special school places, allows children to remain within their local communities and have more opportunities to integrate and be supported by their peers. In addition, it ensures that children can attend their local school and that they are getting the right support in the right place at the right time. This will not only benefit the children's outcomes and independence later in life, but also reduces home to school transport costs and costs of placements in independent special schools. The cost of a placement in a special school is £10,000 per child, per year, compared to the average cost of an independent special school placement of £65,000 per child, per year. Therefore, the creation of a Special Educational Needs unit is significantly less expensive to both revenue and the high needs block.

In December 2023, Cabinet approved the initiation of feasibility studies and informal consultations to create additional specialist places across the county.

### **Carnforth Community Primary School**

The proposal is to create a Special Educational Needs unit for up to sixteen children with social communication and interaction needs at Carnforth Community Primary School.

The informal consultation was carried out between 8 May 2024 and 22 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 June 2024, and it was agreed that the formal consultation could proceed.

The statutory notice was published, and the formal consultation was carried out between 21 June 2024 and 19 July 2024. A public meeting was held in school on 5 July 2024.

There were no responses to the formal consultation.

The Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed [here](#).

### **Clayton Brook Primary School**

The proposal is to create a Special Educational Needs unit for up to sixteen children with social communication and interaction needs at Clayton Brook Primary School.

The informal consultation was carried out between 13 May 2024 and 26 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 June 2024, and it was agreed that the formal consultation could proceed.



The statutory notice was published, and the formal consultation was carried out between 20 June 2024 and 18 July 2024. A public meeting was held in school on 4 July 2024.

There were no responses to the formal consultation.

The Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed [here](#).

### **St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School**

The proposal is to create a Special Educational Needs unit for up to sixteen children with social communication and interaction needs at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School. Eight places will be available in the short to medium term.

The informal consultation was carried out between 13 May 2024 and 26 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 June 2024, and it was agreed that the formal consultation could proceed.

The statutory notice was published, and the formal consultation was carried out between 21 June 2024 and 19 July 2024. A public meeting was held in school on 4 July 2024.

There were 21 responses to the formal consultation:

20 of the respondents strongly agreed with the proposal and 1 respondent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Comments included: the need for this type of provision; St Joseph's is an excellent, inclusive school and that all pupils would benefit from the proposal to create a Special Educational Needs Unit.

Further details of the consultation responses are set out at Appendix 'A'.

The Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed [here](#).

### **Appendices**

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

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 'A'	St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School - Formal Consultation response summary

### **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

Any building works that are agreed by the county council outlined in the proposals to increase the availability of special needs provision throughout the county will be funded via the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation and/or capital receipts arising from the disposal of assets previously held for education, where appropriate. The High Needs Capital allocation is grant funding and the amounts of funding available may limit the schemes that are deliverable.

The estimated costs are as follows:

Carnforth Community Primary School	£125,000
Clayton Brook Primary School	£27,450
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School	£15,000

Carnforth Community Primary School will create 16 places in the Special Educational Needs unit, involving some renovation of the existing space including installing new access doors, installing partition walls, improving existing access points and external fencing. The unit will have 8 places from November 2024 and an additional 8 places from September 2025.

Clayton Brook Primary School will create 16 places in the Special Educational Needs unit, involving electrical improvement works, improved access arrangements, new welfare provision and associated making good works. The unit will have 8 places from November 2024 and an additional 8 places from September 2025.

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School will create 8 places in the Special Educational Needs unit by November 2025, involving a small adaptation to the current space, including sink and toilet adaptations.

It is anticipated that the costs for any works necessary in respect of the three schools can be accommodated from within the High Needs Capital Allocation. Cabinet is asked to approve the costings as above.

By increasing the county council's internal Specialist 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 revenue- high needs block funding.

## Procurement

The selection of contractors to undertake the capital works will be carried out in full compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, either through the use of established frameworks, or through undertaking a compliant procurement exercise following the county council's Procurement Rules, where appropriate.



## **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 initial review of provision in Lancashire that informed the SEND Sufficiency Strategy and the further review in June 2021, indicated there were fewer children and young people educated in mainstream schools in Lancashire than nationally. There were also more children educated in specialist provision and secondary alternative provision in Lancashire than nationally, and therefore the demands on high needs block funding are significant.

The lack of access to supported provision in mainstream schools and to local specialist provision of particular designations and for those with the most complex needs is resulting in some children and young people travelling to schools outside their community.

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 Assessments for Carnforth Community Primary School, Clayton Brook Primary School and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School can be viewed via the links set out above.



## List of Background Papers

Paper

Date

Contact/Tel

None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

