

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 5 December 2024

Report of the Director of Finance and Commerce

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
Preston Rural; Longridge with
Bowland;

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

School Place Planning Delivery Programme 2024-27 - New School Places in Preston

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

(Appendix 'B' will be circulated after the Open Evening meetings on 20 and 27 November 2024 and will provide a summary of extended consultation)

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Brief Summary

This report provides an update on the outcome of the public consultation for the expansion of Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School.

Pupil projections indicate there will be a shortfall of primary school places in the Goosnargh and Grimsargh planning area in Preston, and the adjoining planning area of Longridge in Ribble Valley from 2025/26.

To address the increased demand in these two planning areas, in September 2024, Cabinet approved the commencement of a public consultation in relation to the proposed expansion of Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School, increasing the school's published admission number from 30 to 60 gradually increasing the capacity of the school from 210 to 420 places.

It was proposed to provide the expansion initially through a one-year temporary increase to the published admission number from 30 to 60 from September 2025, facilitated by the provision of temporary accommodation. The expansion would then become permanent from September 2026, following the completion of the capital build project. This report summarises the findings of the public consultation.



Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve, subject to the outcome of the consultations, the proposal to permanently expand Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School by one form of entry, by increasing the published admission number from 30 to 60 with effect from 2026/27, gradually increasing the school's capacity from 210 to 420.
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Finance and Commerce, in consultation with the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to consider and agree what mitigations (if any) might be necessary as a result of the consultations and to take these forward as appropriate.

Detail

Lancashire County Council has a statutory duty to ensure that a school place is available for every child of statutory school age living in Lancashire who requires one. As a result of high birth rates and additional housing impact, there is a projected shortfall of primary school places in the Preston planning area of Goosnargh and Grimsargh and the adjoining planning area of Longridge, within the borough of Ribble Valley.

The approach of assessing future demand collectively for the two planning areas was established in the 2022 School Provision Delivery Plan, due to the cumulative impact of housing development across the two areas and the limited scope to expand any of the existing primary schools in Longridge.

The Expansion Proposal

It is proposed to increase the published admission number of Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School by one form of entry, increasing the reception intake from 30 to 60 places. The expansion would be delivered initially with a one-year temporary expansion in September 2025, facilitated by the provision of temporary accommodation, with the expansion becoming permanent from September 2026, following completion of the capital project. The increased admission number will gradually increase the school's capacity from 210 to 420.

Consultations

Goosnargh & Grimsargh Planning Area - Additional permanent 1 form entry from 2026/27 at Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School

Department for Education Guidance ['Making significant changes \(Prescribed Alternations\) to maintained Schools – 2023'](#) prescribes that significant enlargements to a maintained school requires the publication of a statutory proposal and consultation with stakeholders.



The guidance advises that:

"The statutory process should be followed to enlarge premises as set out in the Prescribed Alterations Regulations if:

- the proposed enlargement is permanent (longer than three years) and would increase the capacity of the school by: more than 30 pupils; and
- 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser)"

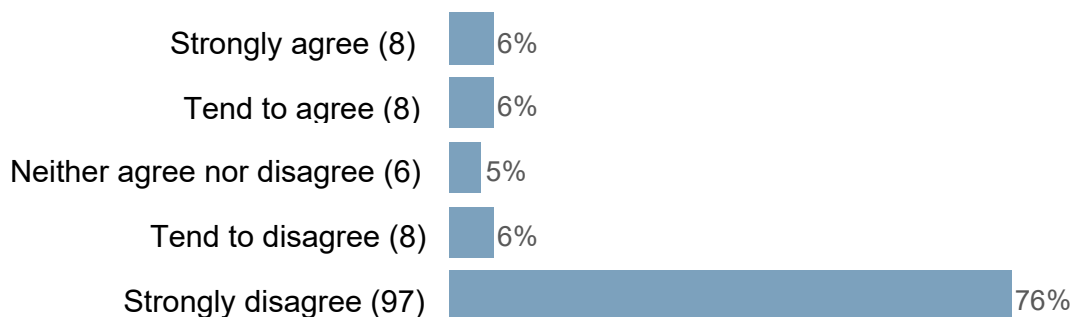
The county council's proposal to expand Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School meets the criteria for the statutory process.

On 16 September 2024, the county council published a statutory notice in relation to the expansion proposal for Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School. In accordance with the statutory process, the notice invited representations (objections or comments) within the statutory notice period, i.e., from 16 September 2024 to 13 October 2024.

In response to the published proposal, the county council received 128 responses, a summary of the results from the online survey is provided below.

Outcomes of the consultation

16 (12%) respondents supported the proposal to expand Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School, 105 (82%) did not support the proposal and 6 (5%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal.



The Department for Education guidance advises that decision makers should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s).

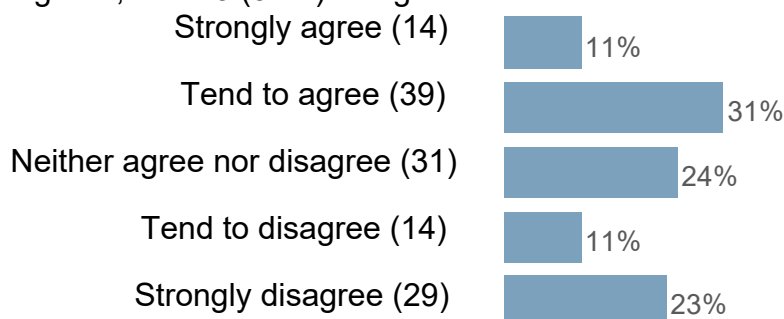
47 (37%) of the respondents who did not support the proposal were identified as a parent/carer of a current pupil at Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School, 7 (5%) respondents were identified as parents of future pupils at Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School and 35 (27%) of the respondents were identified as an interested member of the local community.

In contrast, only 4 (3%) of the respondents who were in support of the proposal were identified as parent/carer of a current pupil of Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of



England Primary School, 2 (2%) of the respondents were identified as parents of future pupils and 6 (5%) of the respondents were identified as an interested member of the local community.

However, 53 (42%) respondents stated that there was a need for additional primary places in the Goosnargh, Grimsargh & Longridge Area, 31 (24%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 43 (34%) disagreed that there was a need for additional places.



Consideration has been given to all responses to the consultation. Where possible issues raised will be addressed in future planning.

Key concerns raised by respondents on line related to:

Limited Parking (85 (66%) responses)

Of the 85 responses, 37 (44%) respondents who expressed concerns about parking were identified as a parent/carer of a pupil of Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary or a future pupil.

Parking arrangements will be reviewed as part of the planning application and implementation of the proposal. Parking and school access have been discussed with the school and alternative entry points are being considered.

Volume of Traffic and Road Safety (107 (84%) responses)

Of the 107 responses, 52 (49%) respondents who expressed concerns about volume of traffic and road safety were identified as a parent/carer of a pupil of Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary or a future pupil.

In addition to the volume of traffic and road safety 74 (58%) of respondents stated that there were already concerns around pupil and pedestrian safety in and around the school area due to inconsiderate parking and vehicles mounting the pavements to pass through the area. They said this would only increase if the proposal went ahead as pupils would be travelling from further afield.

A detailed travel survey is being undertaken to inform a detailed travel plan/strategy. This will take into consideration all concerns to ensure pupil and parent safety. Further discussions with the school will also be undertaken to look at risk mitigation and health and safety.



Concerns expansion could affect the ethos and educational standards of the school (37 (29%) responses)

Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School currently has a 'Good' Ofsted rating. The school is committed to continuing to deliver a high standard of education.

The school has openly shared with the local community its commitment to maintaining the quality and ethos of the school for all children.

Concerns that the proposed expansion is in the wrong location and the New School at Whittingham Hospital site should be built/brought forwards instead of expanding Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School (72 (56%) responses)

The consultation for the proposed new school at the Whittingham Hospital site identified that 54% of the 22 respondents disagreed with the proposal for the new school, and 14% stated that existing schools in the area should be expanded, rather than build the new school, and 14% asked for more options to be explored.

The data clearly indicates that there is an ongoing sufficiency need in the Goosnargh area. The proposal made is to meet this need through expanding Goosnargh Oliverson's whilst developing the Whittingham site. At this time the only way the need can be met within the timescales required is through delivery of both the Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England expansion and the new school at Whittingham.

Further areas of concern

29 (23%) respondents raised concerns that there were surplus places at Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School and the surrounding schools in the area, therefore, there was not a need for the expansion.

The concerns of surplus relate to current numbers and not the projection of future need.

30 (23%) respondents raised concerns that pupils were travelling into Goosnargh from Grimsargh, Longridge and Preston to attend schools in Goosnargh when they should attend schools in their own area.

We deliver school places to meet local need and work in collaboration with education to influence admissions arrangements.

43 (34%) respondents raised concerns that Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School should maintain a small village school status in keeping with the village of Goosnargh.

The school is confident that any enlargement will have no impact on values, ethos and or educational attainment.



Concerns of oversupplying places in the Goosnargh area would not only have an impact on other schools in the area with low numbers, but would also leave surplus places for pupils from further afield to access, which would increase pressures on traffic and road safety.

Respondents also stated that not only would the expansion of the school mean additional pupils and subsequent increase in traffic, but consideration would also need to be given to an increase in numbers at the nursery and the before and after school clubs. This would impact on the church facilities and the overall infrastructure needed in the village to accommodate the increase in numbers.

The location of school places is outlined in our School Place Planning Strategy and ensures we deliver the right level of capacity, at the right time and in the right area. Any impact on traffic is managed through a travel plan strategy.

Response to feedback from Open Evening

Following the public consultation period and on review of the information received from the community, further Open Evenings were held in person in order to address the concerns. An initial first meeting has been held and from this consideration has been given to extend the traffic survey.

A second event is to be held on 27 November 2024 and following the feedback from this, further analysis will be given to the views shared and of the need to align the most appropriate way forward to meet the county council's statutory duty whilst taking account of local community views.

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'	Capital Scheme Projections

Appendix 'B' will be circulated after the Open Evening meetings on 20 and 27 November 2024 and will provide a summary of extended consultation.

Consultations

Following the formal online consultation held between 5 September to 13 October 2024, and in response to the issues raised, two Public Open Evenings were held in the community on 20 and 27 November 2024 to address and respond to the communities' concerns. Appendix 'B' contains the feedback from these Open Evenings which will not be available at the time of the Cabinet agenda publication but which will be circulated in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:



Risk Management

If additional school places are not created, there is a risk that the county council would fail in its statutory responsibility to make sure that a maintained school place is available to all Lancashire children of the appropriate age range who want one.

Providing additional places increases the overall capacity in the area and, if projected pupil numbers fail to materialise as expected, there may be surplus places created by the proposals. In these circumstances, the authority proposes to work with the group of schools within the School Planning Area to ensure that there is a strategic approach to managing the sufficiency of school places available.

Equality and Cohesion

The proposal will impact most protected characteristics groups but will have its greatest impact on children and young people (age protected characteristics group). It is anticipated that the proposal should contribute positively towards the Public Sector Equality Duty's general aims of advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between protected characteristics groups as there will potentially be additional school places available. However, consultations relating to the proposal have raised concerns which may have or be perceived to have a negative impact on the local community in relation to the same general aims. In considering the outcome of the public meetings and consultation and final recommendation, Cabinet is asked to be mindful of the Public Sector Equality Duty's general aims when making a decision.

Legal

The local authority has a statutory duty under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient primary and secondary school places for all children residing in its area. This duty includes the obligation to plan and secure the provision of additional school places where necessary to meet current and future demand. Where an expansion project constitutes a significant change, the council must follow Department for Education Guidance in managing the project. Guidance is set out in: [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools)

In accordance with the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, the local authority must undertake a formal consultation process with stakeholders, including parents, school staff, and local residents, before making any significant changes to school capacity. This ensures transparency and community involvement in the decision-making process.

If a decision is made not to expand an existing school but to open a new school then the process to be followed is set out in '[The Free School Presumption](#)' (Department for Education, May 2024). The guidance assists local authorities to establish new academies (free schools) to meet the need for additional school places providing commissioning guidance and model templates for the School Specification, Application Form for potential sponsors and Model Assessment criteria.



In June 2020, Cabinet approved the adoption of the Department for Education framework for the establishment of new schools in Lancashire. This and any subsequent guidance will be considered in developing each proposal for a new school.

Financial

Subject to Cabinet approval, the School Place Planning Delivery Programme will form the basis of subsequent reports to Cabinet setting out the capital cost estimates for each project to be funded in the first instance through the Department for Education Basic Need Grant and developer contributions for education infrastructure.

Provision for the expansion costs at Goosnargh Oliverson's Church of England Primary School will be made in the 2025/26 - 2027/28 capital programme.

Property Asset Management

The approval of a school expansion that requires a build project that will extend the footprint of the building will be subject to obtaining relevant planning permission and Section 77(3) consent for the change of use of the land (or meeting the terms of The School Playing Fields General Disposal and Change of Use Consent (No 5) 2014.)

Procurement

In the event that external contractors are procured to carry out any required works, the contractors will be selected in accordance with the relevant procurement legislation, either through the use of an established framework or via a new tender exercise.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Appendix 'A' contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

