

Report to: Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny
Committee

Cabinet

Date: 12 November 2009

19 November 2009

Subject: Primary School Provision: Permission to Consult on the
Provision of Additional School Places

Report of: Executive Director of Children and Young People's
Services

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Purpose / summary: To advise Cabinet of the predicted shortfall in primary school places from 2010 onwards in parts of the borough; propose remedial action and request permission to commence consultation.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: These are contained within section 7 of the report.

Recommendation / decision: It is recommended that Cabinet:

requests stage 1 consultation to begin on the permanent extension of Tyldesley Primary School to 315 pupils (published admission number of 45) with effect from September 2011.

requests consultation to be undertaken with diocesan authorities and the following schools on proposals to increase admission numbers for 2010 year only: Orrell Holgate; Orrell St James Catholic; Leigh St Thomas CE; Leigh St Joseph's Catholic; Leigh St Gabriel's Catholic; and Lowton J + I.

requests further reports on the outcome of consultations prior to taking a decision to publish statutory notices for Tyldesley Primary School and requesting an in-year variation to increases in admission numbers for 2010 for other schools.

Key Decision:

This report involves a key decision within ground(s) 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 1 December 2009

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:

The capital costs can be contained within the current capital programme. Details will be provided in the Cabinet report following consultation. Schools will receive additional funding from the Direct Schools Grant as a result of additional pupils.

Staffing:
Policy:

Determined by individual governing bodies. Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings.

Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?

A Diversity Impact Assessment will be included in the future reports on outcome of consultation.

Wards affected:

Tyldesley; Astley Mosley Common; Orrell; Leigh East; Leigh South; Golborne + Lowton West

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council's asset base or its occupation?

Yes

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Yes

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:			
Discussion leading to a decision	X	Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
12 Nov 2009		19 Nov 2009	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings 2009/10	n/a	n/a	School Place Commissioning Team; Children and Young People's Services

Proper Officer



Date

October 2009

1. **Background**

- 1.1 It is the local authority's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available for its residents. The school places need to be located appropriately in order to properly serve the population and avoid additional revenue expenses due to the breach of infant class sizes at admission appeals.
- 1.2 The birth rate in the borough has risen steadily from 3,256 in the 2001/02 academic year (entered primary education in 2006/07) to 3,942 in 2007/08 (entering primary education in 2012/13). This is equivalent to an additional 23 forms of entry. The most recent birth figures show that 3,896 children were born in the borough in the 2008/09 academic year.
- 1.3 The rise in the birth rate has not been evenly spread throughout the borough. Some areas that are currently carrying surplus places are predicted to continue to do so, whilst other areas are predicted to have insufficient places in future years. In some areas, the birth rate has fluctuated considerably from year to year. Additionally, it is clear that other factors such as migration are having an impact on demand for school places. These factors attach a high level of risk to long term pupil place planning in the primary sector.
- 1.4 The birth rate and demand for places have been closely monitored and it is the view of officers that plans need to be put in place to deal with increase in demand for 2010 and 2011 in some parts of the borough and that a permanent solution needs to be sought for the Tyldesley area.
- 1.5 School capital funding beyond 2011 is unknown, therefore, this report deals only with the need for places up to September 2011. A further report will be presented for 2012 and beyond once school capital funding for those years is known or can be estimated with any degree of certainty.

2. **Primary Roll Projections**

- 2.1 An annual part of the LA's responsibility for the planning of school place provision involves the calculation of projected pupil numbers for primary and secondary schools.
- 2.2 For the primary sector, this is done by comparing the take up of school places in each area of the borough to the corresponding year's birth data in the same area over the three most recent consecutive years. The take up rate is applied to the birth rate to provide an estimate of the number of school places required in each area for the next four years.
- 2.3 It should be noted that there are no reliable figures available to the Authority which show the number of children in the borough between birth and starting school, hence the use of birth data combined with take up rates.
- 2.4 The effect of new housing on demand for school places is calculated by applying a pupil yield figure of 3 children per year group per 100 houses built and occupied.
- 2.5 Projected numbers for the borough overall are within 1% accuracy, whereas for clusters of schools within recognised geographical areas predictions have

been within 5% accuracy in the past. However, analysis of recent roll projections has demonstrated larger variations between predicted and actual figures with no traceable reason for it.

3. Additional Place Requirements 2010

3.1 Orrell

3.1.1 There are currently 140 reception places available between the three Orrell primary schools: Holgate; Newfold and St James Catholic. For the 2009/10 intake, the three schools received 157 first preference applications between them. Pupils were displaced to Wigan West but places at the closest schools also filled to capacity.

3.1.2 For 2010, Orrell St James is due to revert to its previous admission number of 40, having had an admission number of 50 for 2008 and 2009 in order to deal with increased demand for Catholic school places. Whilst the birth rate for the 2010 intake year in Orrell is 12 less than it was for the previous year, births in Wigan West are 35 more than for 2009. For 2010, Orrell is predicted to be short of 6 reception places and Wigan West is predicted to only have 3 spare places.

3.1.3 For 2011, the Orrell figures are similar but more places are predicted to be available in Wigan West. However for 2012 and 2013, the corresponding births figures for Orrell are much higher than previous years suggesting that a more permanent solution will be required once funds have been identified.

3.1.4 A temporary solution for 2010 needs to be put in place and acted upon if the pupil numbers materialise as expected. St James and Holgate were most heavily oversubscribed for 2009 and it is suggested that temporary accommodation is provided at one of the schools in order to increase the admission number and cater for demand for one year only. In doing so, the longer term predictions for Orrell need to be considered.

3.2 East Leigh

3.2.1 The Leigh area has proved particularly difficult to predict recently. This may be due to high mobility levels and / or shifting parental preferences across the area leading to significantly higher than usual variances between predicted and actual numbers.

3.2.2 Births in the Central Leigh area rose from 87 for the corresponding 2009 intake year to 123 for 2010, however, the Westleigh area is expected to be able to cater for the majority of these children. In Leigh East it is predicted that an additional 21 places will be required for 2010.

3.2.3 A temporary solution is required for 2010 only. It is suggested that additional places are provided at either St Thomas CE; St Joseph's Catholic or St Gabriel's Catholic depending on accommodation and site issues and parental preferences.

3.3 Lowton and Golborne

- 3.3.1 All available reception places were filled across primary schools in these two areas in 2009. For 2010, the corresponding births are 24 higher than for 2009 with most of the increase being in Lowton.
- 3.3.2 As Lowton J + I has an admission number of 17 and the authority is consulting on increasing the admission number to 30 from 2012, it is suggested that Lowton J + I should be the school considered for a temporary increase in admission number for 2010 only. The advantage of this approach is that, subject to consultation, the school will be rebuilt for 2012 and temporary accommodation will only be required for two years.

4. **Tyldesley**

- 4.1 The Tyldesley area was predicted to require additional reception places in 2009 and 2010 and, on 28 April 2008, Cabinet agreed that the admission number of Tyldesley Primary should be increased from 30 to 45 for two years only. Implementation involved the siting of two temporary classrooms on the school site.
- 4.2 In 2009, Tyldesley Primary received 66 first preference applications for 45 places. It was the only school in Tyldesley that was oversubscribed with first preferences. After the allocation, all other Tyldesley primary schools were full, with the exception of St John's Mosley Common CE which had 9 spare places. St John's serves a completely different area from Tyldesley Primary and is around 2.7 miles away. All schools in the neighbouring Atherton area were also full in reception for 2009.
- 4.3 Whilst reception intakes for 2011 are predicted to be lower than for 2009 and 2010, births data suggests that the 2012 intake will be similar to 2009. The increased accommodation at Tyldesley Primary will not be able to cater for this additional demand and the admission number at the school is currently set to revert to 30 from 2011 onwards.
- 4.4 The LA is under a statutory duty to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning school places, along with improving educational standards. The Cabinet report dated 20 September 2007 considered a number of options for expanding various schools in the Tyldesley area and provided the reasons for enlarging Tyldesley Primary as follows:
- high levels of oversubscription and admission appeals for many years, leading to disappointment for many local parents;
 - the convenient location of the school for many parents; and
 - the large site that can easily accommodate a 1½ form entry school.
- In addition, the school has good educational standards and provides a range of extended services for parents and pupils.
- 4.5 In order to provide a degree of stability for parents; ease the management of the increase in size for the school; and allow the LA to manage parental expectations, it is suggested that the school be permanently enlarged from 2011. This will allow the current admission number of 45 to continue to be applied and will cause least disappointment for parents.

5. Consultation requirements

- 5.1 Statutory consultation is not required to increase admission numbers for one year. However, diocesan authorities and neighbouring schools will be consulted on any proposals and Cabinet will be informed of the outcome prior to making a final decision.
- 5.2 It is suggested that any proposed enlargements for 2010 are implemented only when the primary application forms have been received and likely results are known. This will involve asking the Schools Adjudicator for an in-year variation to admission numbers but will avoid unnecessary spend and the potential destabilisation of neighbouring schools. Because the increase will be for one year only, it is likely to be made possible by the use of temporary classrooms.
- 5.3 For the proposed permanent enlargement of Tyldesley Primary School full statutory consultation will be required prior to Cabinet taking a final decision.

6. Proposals

- 6.1 It is proposed that consultation is held with the relevant diocesan authorities and the primary schools in Orrell; Leigh and Lowton on the proposals to increase admission numbers for one year only. A report on the outcome of these consultations will be presented at a future meeting of Cabinet at which Cabinet can decide whether to request an in-year variation to admission numbers from the Schools Adjudicator in respect of each proposal. It should be noted that voluntary aided schools will approach the Schools Adjudicator on this matter, with support from the LA.
- 6.2 Because of the volatility in pupil numbers, it is proposed that no further action (other than consultation) be taken until the outcome of the 2010 reception applications round is known. The applications will help to determine whether increases in admission numbers are required and, if so, at which schools and to what extent. There will then be sufficient time to organise additional temporary accommodation, if required.
- 6.3 It is proposed that stage 1 consultation be held on a proposal to permanently enlarge Tyldesley Primary School from 2011 and a report on the outcome of this consultation be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

7. Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option

- 7.1 The LA, as commissioner of school places, has duties to promote choice and diversity and to respond to parental views. The Government wants a 'system shaped by parents' and expects LAs to expand popular and successful schools even when there are surplus places elsewhere in the same area.
- 7.2 All of the proposals contained in this report relate to popular and often oversubscribed schools. Parental preferences for 2010 will be considered before Cabinet determines which schools to request in-year variations for.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The LA must ensure that there are sufficient school places in all areas of the borough. Birth rates within areas are fluctuating, capital funding beyond 2011 is unknown, as is the demand for primary school places beyond 2013. For these reasons it is suggested that temporary one year increases in admission numbers is the most appropriate solution for most cases at this point in time. The exception to this is Tyldesley Primary that has a history of heavy oversubscription and already has two temporary classrooms on site. It is considered that a permanent solution is more appropriate in this case.

