

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF KNOWSLEY

To Leader and Members of the Cabinet

Meeting: 7th September 2022

Wards Affected: Halewood East

Executive Remit: Children's Services

Key Decision

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CHILDREN)

PROPOSAL TO RETURN PLANTATION PRIMARY SCHOOL TO 3 FORM ENTRY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Knowsley Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient schools places are available for every school age child to access educational opportunities within reasonable distance from where they live.
- 1.2 East Halewood development site has a residential allocation, with the capacity to accommodate c.1,100-1,500 new homes. In accordance with Local Plan policy, consideration has been given at an early stage to the implications arising from future development of this site for education, in particular primary schools
- 1.3 Each year the Local Authority uses data on school capacity, live birth data, pupil census, housing developments yields and in year transfers to project the number of school places needed. The Local authority aims to provide additional places through the expansion of existing schools based on physical; capacity and whether the school is well placed in terms of governance and performance.
- 1.4 The School Organisation Strategy sets out the process to conduct reviews and set of appraisal factors to consider preferred options. The preferred option is to recommend the expansion of Plantation Primary School returning it to a 3-form entry to alleviate pressures in the Halewood East are until 2025/26
- 1.5 The Local Authority has secured section 106 funding agreements from Housing Developers in Halewood East to create these additional places

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Cabinet are recommended to

- (a) Approve the proposals to return Plantation Primary School to a 3- form entry from September 2023;
- (b) Approve the capital costs associated with this decision funded through the receipt of section 106 funding from the Halewood East Developments; and,
- (c) Delegate authority to the Councils Asset Service to progress the scheme to planning, tender and monitoring of the contract once awarded.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Halewood is served by six primary schools, with a combined capacity of 1,695 places and only 62 overall primary education surplus places available Reception to Year 6.
- 3.2 The Council is aware that there are already several volume housebuilders with major interests in the East Halewood site. Consequentially, necessary section 106 agreements have been secured. Schools in Halewood have a good reputation and would present an attractive offer to potential new residents.
- 3.4 Taking into account the predicted long-term needs for new places arising from the East of Halewood development, an area review of the Halewood Area was undertaken as set out in the School Organisational process.
- 3.5 The area review identified the three closest schools to the Halewood East development to be considered each within a mile of the site as:

Halewood Church of England Primary School: this school is located approximately 0.5 miles from the East Halewood site. The school is operated as an Academy by Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust and was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in September 2017. Its estate is extremely constrained, and it is also located within a conservation area.

St. Mark's Catholic Primary School: this school is again located approximately 0.5 miles from the East Halewood site. The school is a maintained school and was rated Good by Ofsted in October 2019. The school once operated as a 2FE but has now reduced to a 1FE with surplus accommodation now demolished by the Archdiocese.

Plantation Primary School: this school is located approximately 0.8 miles from the East Halewood site. The school is a maintained school and was rated Good by Ofsted in November 2018. Historically this site has occupied two separate schools, and the school has previously operated as a 3FE entry school as a result there are mothballed classrooms that can be converted back to educational use.

- 3.5 The area review identified that the most cost-effective solution based on capacity and performance would be to return Plantation Primary back to a 3FE entry school. This can be completed in the timescales required to alleviate pressures within the Halewood East area until at least 2025/2026.
- 3.6 Governors at the school have agreed to a temporary bulge year to support the 2022-2023 co-ordinated admissions process. Building modifications to reception classrooms are being carried out during the summer period as approved this proposal was approved Under Delegated Authority – Decision number **(CS 08 2022)**.
- 3.6.1 To support Plantation Primary School to return to a permanent 3-form entry with 90 pupils per year group, a further two phases of building modifications are required which include upgrade existing classrooms, a two-classroom extension, disabled compliance modifications, ICT infrastructure and associated external works. The building work is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Resources

- 4.1.1 The estimated costs for the overall project are £3.700m including professional fees and charges. This includes phase 1 (£0.390m) which was approved in May 2022 and is funded from early years s106 contributions related to the East of Halewood housing development site.
- 4.1.2 The estimated costs associated with the remaining two phases and associated ICT infrastructure and playground improvements is £3.310m as outlined below and includes contingency provision and inflation costs to allow for market conditions when tendered.

	£m
Phase 2	2.300
Phase 3	0.880
ICT / Playground	0.130
TOTAL	3.310

4.1.3 The estimated total cost of £3.310m will be met from primary school education facilities s106 developer contributions arising from the East of Halewood Housing Development. The total s106 developer contributions secured for primary school education facilities for the East of Halewood housing development site is currently £4.604m.

4.1.4 The trigger points for receipt of the s106 income fit with the timetable of works, however, if there is any delay in the works there may be a requirement to for the Council to cash flow the costs.

4.2 Other Resources

The project will be designed, tendered, and monitored by the Corporate Asset Service.

5. EQUALITY AND SOCIAL VALUE IMPACT

5.1 Equality and Diversity

Access to good quality places is key to raising achievement and address inequality. Increasing primary school places with the Halewood East area will enable future pupils to receive a primary offer close to where they live

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the decision

5.2 Social Value

The approval will ensure the council meets its statutory duty for the provision of pupil places the risk if decision is not approved would result in the Local Authority unable to deliver its statutory duties and children in the Halewood East area do not have fair access to educational opportunity

6. CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no climate emergency issues arising from this report

7. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

7.1 The local authority will commence the process of the consultation/determinations of admission arrangements

7.2 Determination arrangements will be notified within the 'Information for Parents Booklet' and admissions website

JULIE MOSS
Executive Director (Children)

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Appendix/Appendices: -

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 Summary of building proposals

Background Documents: -

None

Suggested Background Reading: -

School Organisational Strategy