

**Report to:** Children and Young People's Panel / Cabinet

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 / 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007

**Subject:** Proposed Expansion of Landgate School:  
Results of Informal Consultation

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

**Contact officer:** Elaine Baulcombe  
e.baulcombe@wiganmbc.gov.uk

---

**Purpose/summary:** The purpose of this report is to:

- inform members of the outcome of the informal consultation on the proposal to expand the provision at Landgate School;
- request permission to conduct formal consultation.

**Alternative option considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:** This is contained within the report.

**Recommendation/decision:** It is recommended that:

- the consultation be taken to the formal stage, through the publication of statutory notices, to:
  - extend the school building at Landgate Lane, Bryn;
  - extend the age range of the school to cater for pupils up until the age of 19 years;
  - increase the approved number to 70.
- enabling work continues to be developed, for this scheme, so that the potential opening date of April 2008 can be achieved, depending upon the outcome of formal consultation.

**Key Decision:** This report involves a key decision within ground 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **five working days** have elapsed after that (**making a total of seven working days after the meeting**) i.e. before 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

**Implications:**

Financial:	Capital Programme and Schools' Budget via Prudential Borrowing Power.
Staffing:	There are no direct staffing implications as a result of this report.
Policy:	School Organisation Plan. LA Inclusion Strategy.
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No
Wards affected:	All
Special Interest Members – Which have been consulted	None

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	<b>Yes</b>
Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	<b>Yes</b>
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	<b>No</b>

**For Cabinet reports only :**

Categorisation of the report:	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>
Discussion leading to a decision	<b>x</b>	Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

**Tracking/Process:**

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
	16/04/07 – 08/05/07		
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
24/05/07		31/05/07	

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

Document	Date	File Reference	Place of Inspection
Report to CYPP and Cabinet 'The Proposed Expansion of Landgate School'	08/03/07 15/03/07		Progress House Westwood Park Drive Wigan WN3 4HH

Proper Officer



Date

15<sup>th</sup> May 2007

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 In February 2003, the Local Authority began informal consultation on a wide ranging review of its specialist provision. At that time, a commitment was made to continue to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs whenever possible.
- 1.2 In September 2003, Landgate School was established to meet the local need for specific specialist provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The school was registered for 24 pupils aged 4-14 years. At that time there were 8 pupils on roll.
- 1.3 In September 2004, the age range at the school was increased to cater for pupils up until the age of 16 years. There are currently 35 pupils on roll.
- 1.4 Additional provision is now urgently required to meet the specific needs of this expanding pupil population.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007, to meet Wigan's need for additional provision of this type, based on the evidence presented, Cabinet approved the proposed expansion of Landgate School, and the request to conduct informal consultation on the proposal was agreed.
- 2.2 Prudential borrowing, to supplement the Capital Programme to finance the proposal, was also agreed, as was the continuation of enabling work to allow the anticipated completion date of the project to be realised.

## **3 Alternative option considered and reason for selecting the one recommended**

- 3.1 The alternative option considered was that Landgate School should remain unchanged.
- 3.2 In support of the recommended option, from a pupil perspective, there are significant benefits to high-quality local education:
  - substantial reduction in travelling time;
  - continued links with the local community;
  - better supported transition with local services and support agencies.

From a value for money perspective, there is a clear case to expand the current provision at Landgate School, as opposed to placing pupils in expensive placements in the independent sector.

- 3.3 All responses received from informal consultation supported the proposed expansion.

## **4 The informal consultation process**

- 4.1 Informal consultation took place between 16<sup>th</sup> April 2007 and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2007.
- 4.2 The Local Authority produced a consultation document which is attached at Appendix 1. This was sent to parents, staff and governors of Landgate

School, and the parents of pupils with severe autism who currently attend special schools outside the Borough. The document was also sent to a wide range of other interested parties and was made available to members of the local community.

## **5 Response to the informal consultation**

- 5.1 Responses to the consultation were invited, either via the consultation response form, contained within the consultation document and accessible via the Council website, or by any other written method.
- 5.2 There were 24 written responses received during that time: 22 were made via the response form provided, and two letters were received. A summary is attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.3 A public meeting was held at Landgate School on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007. Sixteen people attended the meeting, and a further 20 called in during the course of the evening to observe the plans. These included staff, parents, governors and local residents. Notes of the meeting are attached at Appendix 3.

## **6 Comments on Areas of Concern**

- 6.1 Whilst all responses were in support of the proposal, reservations concerning the following were expressed:

- **The existing children at Landgate should not suffer as a result of the expansion**

The proposal should not prove disruptive to pupils. Children will remain with their peers, and with staff they are familiar with, which will aid a smooth transition. The pupil:staff ratio will continue to be maintained. Both the school and the Local Authority will work to keep any disruption to a minimum for all concerned.

- **Increase in the volume of traffic, particularly taxis, accessing the site**

Ways of effectively dealing with the increase in traffic are currently being investigated. Traffic management advice, from the appropriate agencies, will be taken in a bid to reduce congestion, and ensure road safety, and improved parking facilities on the Landgate site should serve to reduce the likelihood of parking difficulties. The local neighbourhood and community should not be inconvenienced in any way by the proposal.

## **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 It is recommended that:

- the proposal to expand the provision at Landgate School be taken to formal consultation;
- enabling work continues to be developed, for this scheme, so that the potential completion date of April 2008 can be achieved, depending upon the outcome of formal consultation.

## **Background**

Landgate School was established in September 2003, to meet Wigan's need for specific specialist provision for pupils whose autism severely impacts on their learning. The school was registered for 24 pupils, aged 4-14 years. In September 2004, the age range at the school was increased to also cater for pupils up until the age of 16 years. There are currently 35 pupils on roll.

In 2005 Ofsted reported Landgate School as being successful, and in 2006 the school received National Autistic Society accreditation.

## **What is the proposal?**

The proposal is to expand the provision at Landgate, by fully utilising the more than adequately sized site, to build seven new classrooms. This will allow the school to take up to 70 boys and girls with severe autism between the ages of 4 and 19 years.

## **Why expand the provision?**

The school is no longer big enough to cope with the number of new reception pupils who need the type of provision Landgate can offer. Also, there are some pupils with severe autism, who started school before Landgate opened, who have to travel outside of the Borough to receive their education, at a high cost to the Authority.

## **What would be the benefits?**

### ***Pupil Welfare***

Pupils who would otherwise have to travel long distances to receive their education would benefit from the advantage of:

- substantially reduced travelling times;
- continued links with the local community;

- better supported transition with local services and support agencies;
- continuity of provision ~ from Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 5.

## ***Value for Money***

Significant savings would be made by providing additional places for autistic children in Borough.

## **How do I make my views known?**

A meeting will be held at Landgate School on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> May, at 4.00 pm. This is a public meeting and is open to everyone.

Also, to help you make your views known, a reply slip is provided. Please complete and return to the address shown by **Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2007**. Or, alternatively, you may write to us.

## **What will happen next?**

All responses will be summarised and reported back to Cabinet. You will be able to see copies of the report on the Wigan Council Website ([www.wiganmbc.gov.uk](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk)) and at Progress House.

After full consideration of the recommendations of the report, Cabinet will make a decision and refer it to Council. If the decision is to proceed with the proposal, the process will enter the formal consultation period.

At this stage, statutory notices will be published in a local newspaper, posted at the entrance to Landgate School, and will be available at public places in the area, such as the local Town Hall and library. You have two months from the date of publication of the notices in which to make your views known, in writing, to the Local Authority at the address on the front of this leaflet.



All written comments and objections received, and the Authority's observations on them, will be referred to the School Organisation Committee (SOC), which is an independent, decision-making body. If SOC fail to reach a unanimous decision, all of the evidence will be passed to an independent Adjudicator. Whether the SOC or the Adjudicator makes the final decision, it is binding on everyone involved and there is no right of appeal.

If no objections are received, during the two month period, the final decision will be made by the Council.

NB: Statutory regulations relating to this process are currently under Government review.



## **Review of Specialist Provision**

# **LANDGATE CONSULTATION**

## ***Consultation on the Proposed Expansion of Landgate School***

*April 2007*

Further copies of this document are available from the Access and Inclusion Team (01942-486142). It is also accessible via the Wigan Council Website ([Hwww.wiganmbc.gov.uk](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk)H) and is available in the following formats on request:

- Braille
- Audio-tape
- Other languages

Children and Young People's Services  
Progress House  
Westwood Park Drive  
WIGAN  
WN3 4HH

Email: [education@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:education@wiganmbc.gov.uk)

## CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF LANDGATE SCHOOL

### SUMMARY OF WRITTEN RESPONSES

The period of informal consultation ran from 16<sup>th</sup> April – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2007. Of the 24 written responses received during that time, 22 were made via the response form provided with the consultation document, and two letters were received.

#### Summary of Response Forms

The options to choose from were:

1. Landgate School should remain unchanged.
2. Landgate school should be expanded to accommodate 70 pupils aged 4-19 years.

All responses were in favour of Option 2. The breakdown is shown below.

Preference	Parent	Staff	Gov	Parent/Gov Staff/Gov	Other	Total
Landgate School should be expanded, to accommodate 70 pupils aged 4-19 years.	8	2	4	2	6	22

#### Summary of comments made to support the proposal

1. The size of the current school is inadequate to provide for the growing number of pupils requiring this type of provision.
2. It is much more practical, and better value for money, to have adequate provision in borough rather than children having to travel long distances to access similar provision.
3. Young people should have the right to stay and be educated in their own community. These children and their parents need the support that this facility would provide for them.
4. The excellent progress made by existing pupils, is evidence of the need to expand the school, thus providing equal opportunities for children with autism to continue their education in Wigan, beyond the age of 16.
5. Pupils would benefit from continuity of provision at one school, ie from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 5.
6. The expansion of the school would allow the expertise of the staff, and the facilities already on offer, to be fully utilised.
7. The proposal is fully supported providing that the level of staffing and the attention the children currently receive does not suffer as a result.

## **Summary of Letters**

Letters were received from:

- the parent of a pupil at Landgate School;
- a local resident.

## **Issues Raised**

The **parent's** letter strongly supports the proposal to expand the school, and gives the opinion that, currently, Wigan appears unable to meet the growing need for specialist autistic schooling.

The letter praises the school, and acknowledges the following benefits of local high quality provision being made available up until the age of 19 years:

- reduced travelling times for pupils who would otherwise have to travel out of borough;
- parents feel better supported through being able to maintain closer contact with a local school;
- continuity of provision, from 4-19 years;
- cost-effectiveness – reduced need for expensive out of borough placements.

The **resident's** letter acknowledges the need for expansion at the school, but asks that consideration be given to Landgate residents in the process.

The letter also expresses concern about the increase in volume of traffic, parking problems and road-safety issues.

## **CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF LANDGATE SCHOOL**

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

**held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007 – 4.00 pm at Landgate School**

The Local Authority was represented by CYPS personnel from the Care and Inclusion, Learning and Attainment and Management and Development Branches. The Architect from NPS Northwest was also present.

Richard Powell, Assistant Director for Learning and Attainment, chaired the meeting.

Sixteen people took up the invitation to attend. These included staff, parents, governors and local residents.

### **Introduction**

Richard Powell opened the meeting by:

- welcoming those present;
- outlining the proposal to expand the provision at Landgate School by:
  - building seven new classrooms
  - increasing the school's capacity to take up to 70 pupils
  - increasing the upper age range at the school to 19 years;
- explaining the process of consultation;
- inviting comments.

In support of the proposal, school governor, Alderman Millington, praised the excellent links Landgate has already established with other schools and the community. She also expressed her approval of the idea of continuity of provision at the school – which, if the proposal was progressed, would allow pupils to remain at the school from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 5.

Martin Hanbury, Headteacher, agreed that Landgate does have the benefit of excellent support from local schools, particularly Platt Bridge and Aspull Church, and that the school was very appreciative of this.

Mr Powell spoke briefly about the timescale of the project, explaining the imminent changes to the decision-making process. He explained that the Authority was awaiting notification of new arrangements in this respect.

The proposed 'end of April 2008' completion date was discussed. Mr Hanbury explained that the period from then up until the end of the summer term would probably be used as a transition period, to allow the existing pupils to become familiar with the new classrooms, before the new admission arrangements are implemented.

As no further comments were forthcoming, at this point, Mr Powell handed over to Andrew Dunne from the department's Development and Premises Team.

Mr Dunne presented, on screen, a 3D visual image of the proposed new build at Landgate, which has been designed in full compliance with building / planning regulations. He explained that some of the finer details had yet to be decided, and Mr Hanbury asked those present to give some thought to those finer details, for example, whether they thought that the exposed area between the existing building and the new build should be covered.

Mr Dunne explained that there wasn't an unlimited amount of money available, but that any suggestions would be taken on board and all possibilities explored.

At this point, time was allowed for inspection of the drawings, which were on display, and further comments were invited.

One of the residents expressed her concern about the increase in the volume of traffic (particularly taxis dropping-off and waiting on the road) that would be created as a result of the expansion, explaining that parking in the area was already difficult.

Mr Dunne's reply was that ways of improving the parking facilities on the Landgate site were currently being investigated.

Mr Hanbury said that he was very conscious of the parking issue and would be looking at ways to prevent problems arising.

Alderman Millington claimed that there was an area of spare land, within close proximity, which could possibly be used for parking.

Mr Powell answered that the Development and Premises Team would look at the surrounding area and explore all the possibilities.

Mrs Hitchen, parent/governor, raised the question of road access, and whether it would be beneficial to have some kind of filter system at the junction of the main road with Landgate Lane.

Mr Dunne explained that when the planning application is submitted, the Planning Department advise on whether any traffic lights or roundabouts are necessary. None had been recommended, but this could be looked into further.

All agreed that it was imperative that the local neighbourhood and community should not be inconvenienced in any way by the proposal.

As there were no further comments or questions, the meeting closed at 5.00 pm. The Development and Premises Team, however, remained on site until 7.00 pm, to meet with any latecomers. Approximately 20 more people arrived, but no new issues were raised, other than the suitable replacement of the existing fencing.