



Consultation on developing special school provision in Wigan Council

In March to April 2018 we carried out extensive informal consultation across the borough to gather your views on our current and future specialist provision in Wigan. We wanted to ensure that any plans we develop for the future were co-produced with our children & young people, families and all of our settings and partners. Whatever we develop needs to ensure we have a medium and longer term plan for meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and should not just be around building additional special school places. Instead we wanted to look at how in addition to building in additional capacity, we could also ensure that the SEND offer within our mainstream settings could be strengthened to ensure confidence in that offer.

The feedback we received from the initial informal consultation was very supportive of the good and outstanding special school provision we already have available within the borough. There is overwhelming support that we should retain our current special schools acknowledging that there was a need to provide up to date facilities so that our children are taught in modern and appropriately resourced schools.

There was also a request that we consider special school provision in the Leigh area in addition to an improved offer for higher function autistic children within mainstream settings.

The views received on our outreach and resource provision was mixed and so in parallel to the special school building review, we are carrying out a review of these offers and how that might look in the future. This is being done in collaboration with our settings, parents and partners as part of the SEND transformation programme under the Inclusion & provision strand.

In December Cabinet agreed that we could ask your views on our proposed strategy to take a phased approach to the SEND buildings programme as outlined in this consultation.

We wish to embrace this opportunity to ensure we address suitability, condition and capacity issues. Through this we will ensure we have appropriate, fit for purpose provision to meet the needs of our children.

Whilst it is our ambition to complete all of the proposals, it is important to note at this stage that these are all proposals and alongside this we must build a financial strategy to support the Capital investment required to do all of the proposed work over a 1 – 10 year period. This is why we are making the proposals in phases over a 10 year period. If we are able to bring forward any of the proposed projects it would be our ambition to do that.

Proposals for a phased approach for developing our special school provision

Approximately 1 to 2 years

Hope School

The current school does not have the space required to provide additional places needed. There are also condition issues that need to be addressed and therefore the proposal is to build a new school on a new site on Montrose Avenue (The old PEMBEC/Central Park site). As part of this project we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places.

Approximately 2 – 5 years

Rowan Tree Primary School

The current school does not have the space required to provide additional places needed and it has some condition issues that need to be addressed. Therefore the proposal is to build a new school on the current site or on a new site identified in Leigh. As part of this project we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places. The available land at Rowan Tree would allow us to build a new school whilst maintaining the provision in the current buildings.

Approximately 2 – 5 years

Landgate School, Bryn

The current school does not have the space required to provide additional places needed. It has some condition issues that need to be addressed. Therefore the proposal is to build a new school on the current site or on a new site not yet identified. As part of this project we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places.

In the short term we will be carrying out some minor works to improve the environment.

Approximately 5 to 10 years

Willow Grove Primary School

The current school does not have the space required to provide additional places needed. There are also some condition issues that need to be addressed and therefore the proposal is to build a new school on the current site or on a new site – not yet identified. As part of this project we will build in additional capacity to meet current and future demand for places. The available land at Willow Grove would allow us to build a new school whilst maintaining the provision in the current buildings.

We are also looking to develop a further provision in the Leigh area as an extension of Willow Grove. The site is yet to be identified but there would be potential to build it on the same land we have identified for Rowan Tree. It would remain a separate provision and will be under the leadership of Willow Grove school.

In the short term we are considering other temporary alternatives as there is significant demand for this provision.

Approximately 5- 10 years

Oakfield High School, Hindley

The current school does not have the space required for the number of places needed. We propose to extend the school to provide additional places. In the short term we may need to make some adjustments to the current building or consider off-site provision to meet demand.

Newbridge Learning Community School, Platt Bridge.

There are currently no proposals for this provision.