

REPORT TO: School Forum
DATE: 18th June 2013
SUBJECT: Basic Needs Capital Funding

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report outlines the methodology used to prioritise the schools for Basic Need funding for 2013/14 & 2014/15. It seeks agreement by School Forum to the prioritisation process for the allocation of Basic Need Capital for 2013/14 & 2014/15.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 To agree the prioritisation process outlined within the report;

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Basic Need funding is allocated to local authorities in recognition of the significant pressures local authorities are facing to provide additional school places. In March 2013 the Department for Education announced the two year Basic Need funding for Halton 2013/15 would be £1,203,445.

4.0 Identification of Basic Need Issues

4.1 The model Halton used to allocate the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Basic Need funding, has been applied again for 2013/14 & 2014/15. This model has been developed in order to objectively prioritise schools identifying those with the strongest case for Basic Need support. The four key elements of this model are detailed below:

- The total net capacity for each school has been considered in relation to the current total pupil numbers for each school;
- The future capacity has been projected to identify the number of places likely to be required for each school; and
- Popular schools indicated by parental preference during the admissions process.
- Priority has been given to schools with temporary mobile classrooms – the highest score has been given to schools with long term use of temporary classrooms.

4.2 The list below shows the schools with the highest priority sorted into geographical area (See Appendix 1 for geographical areas).

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School	Widnes East
Ashley School	Widnes West

Beechwood Primary School	Runcorn East
St Clement's Catholic Primary School	Runcorn West
Castle View Primary School	Runcorn West

4.3 **Widnes East**

In Widnes East, one school appears in the priority list, this school is:

- St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

4.3.1 St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

This school is currently operating over capacity, and the lower 3 year groups are operating over the Planned Admission Number (PAN).

4.3.2 Recommendation for Widnes East

The data indicates that there is not a Basic Need issue in Widnes East. St Bede's Infant and Junior schools have been expanded for 2013 as has Lunts Heath Primary School, it is envisaged that the Basic Need issue in this area of Halton will be alleviated from Sept 2013.

Although the voluntary aided schools are close to capacity there is still surplus capacity overall.

4.4 **Widnes West**

In Widnes West, one school appears in the priority list, this school is:

- Ashley School

4.4.1 Ashley School

From September 2013 Ashley school will be re-designated as a school for pupils with complex social communication needs and autism, with an intake for 11-16 year olds of 70, and new post 16 provision of 42. As the capacity of the building is 120 pupils there is no need to increase the size of the building other than to provide the specialist facilities for post sixteen. Currently building work to provide the post 16 facilities is at design stage with a start on site anticipated in the autumn. Monitoring of pupil numbers will continue as the re-designated school becomes established. £500,000 Basic Need capital funding has already been allocated to this project (as approved by Executive Board 18 October 2012 and 28th March 2013) from the 12/13 allocation.

4.4.2 Recommendations for Widnes West

That with the exception of Ashley School, which has a programme of works on going, the data indicates that there is not a Basic Need issue in Widnes West and therefore no further school require expansion.

4.5 **Runcorn East**

In Runcorn East, one school appears in the priority list, this is:

- Beechwood Primary School

4.5.1 Beechwood Primary School

The school is currently operating above capacity overall with four year groups oversubscribed.

The accommodation was rationalised in 2000 to reduce the admission number from 30 to 15, as the school was suffering from surplus capacity. A successful pre-school now accommodates part of the school which was declared surplus and a link club accommodates a double mobile classroom that was previously used. A single mobile classroom, previously declared surplus, was brought back into use for a temporary period whilst the school was over capacity to help address the shortage of classroom space. It is a priority for Halton to replace unsuitable temporary mobile classrooms so that pupils and staff are not disadvantaged by being separate from the main school and having inadequate learning environments which suffer from extreme weather conditions.

The school has expressed an interest in increasing their Planned Admission Number from 15 to 20 pupils and overall capacity from 105 pupils to 140 pupils due to the level of parental preference.

4.5.2 Recommendation for Runcorn East

It is recommended that £100,000 is allocated for the expansion of Beechwood Primary School. A feasibility study will be required to investigate the building options available to accommodate an increased Planned Admission Number from 15 to 20.

4.6 **Runcorn West**

In Runcorn West, two schools appeared in the priority list, they are:

- St Clement's Catholic Primary School
- Castleview School

4.6.1 St. Clement's Catholic Primary School

This school is operating at capacity for 5 year groups, but is not above capacity overall. There are also available places in surrounding Catholic Schools.

4.6.2 Castleview Primary School

This school is operating at capacity for 5 year groups, but is not above capacity overall.

4.6.3 Recommendation for Runcorn West

Basic Need 11/12 capital funding is currently being used to expand Weston Primary School to address pupil place issues in this area, once complete the Basic Need pressure should be alleviated.

4.7 Birth Data analysis

4.7.1 Birth data for Runcorn and Widnes has also been analysed for 2014 and 2015 and compared against the Pupil Number Capacity. The table below shows that the forecast data indicates that there is sufficient capacity for pupils entering the schools in Runcorn and Widnes at Reception age.

Area	Capacity	Birth Data 2014	Birth Data 2015
Runcorn	864	779	691
Widnes	761	706	625
Total	1625	1485	1316

4.8 This is further evidence that Halton will not have a Basic Need issue going forward for the next 2 years.

4.9 The school admissions team have been fully consulted during this process and agree with the findings.