Report No.
ED13030

London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE - PUBLIC

Decision Maker:	**Education Portfolio Holder**
Date:	**For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 19 March 2013**
Decision Type:	Non-Urgent Executive Key
Title:	**CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: PROPOSAL TO EXPAND GLEBE SCHOOL**
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Chief Officer:	Terry Parkin, Executive Director of Education and Care Services
Ward:	West Wickham Ward

1. Reason for report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council Members with the outcomes from consultation on a proposal to expand Glebe School to admit 16 additional children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Year 7 each year from September 2014. The report seeks Education Portfolio Holder approval to progress the expansion.

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2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Members of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

(i) review the outcomes from consultation;

(ii) consider the case for the expansion of Glebe School;

(iii) offer any comments on the above to the Education Portfolio Holder.

2.2 The Education Portfolio Holder is asked to:

(i) consider any comments arising from the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee;

(ii) agree the expansion proposal to take effect from 1 September 2014 and authorise officers to undertake the formal statutory processes (these are outlined in section 5 of this report).

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy

2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £4.8m capital (2013/14)

2. Ongoing costs: Non-Recurring Cost

3. Budget head/performance centre: Dedicated Schools' Grant

4. Total current budget for this head: £4.8m

5. Source of funding: Dedicated Schools' Grant

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 4 staff from the ECS Department are involved in the consultation process to varying degrees.

2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Approx 40 staff hours in total.

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement

2. Call-in: Applicable

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 104 children and their parents/carers.

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes

2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP
I support the proposal.

Cllr Jane Beckley
Having heard the views expressed at the Consultation meeting, I feel quite confident in giving the plan my full support.

3. COMMENTARY

Background

3.1 The number of children now diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is growing, and this Proposal will increase places in the London Borough of Bromley for secondary aged pupils with autism in a cost effective manner, which enables children to attend a local Bromley school which provides a high quality education.

3.2 Glebe School already caters for a large number of children with autism and has developed a considerable level of expertise in this field. If no action is taken, further places will have to be commissioned outside Bromley at higher cost and this could divert funds away from developing Bromley schools. Also, pupils may have to travel considerable distances to and from school and may involve children attending schools where their peers may not be local and therefore the loss of links with the surrounding community of children and young people. There is also concern about the difficulty of monitoring the quality of this provision.

3.3 The Executive Working Group on Special Educational Needs has been instrumental in developing and supporting this Proposal and the LA has worked closely with Glebe School and its Governors to progress the Proposal.

3.4 Please see Report ED12015 for more detail regarding the background for the Proposal (the electronic link to the Report is provided on the agenda).

Consultation

3.4 The Consultation ran from 11 January to 15 February 2013. A consultation letter about the Proposal was distributed as a basis for consulting parents/carers, staff, school governors, prospective parents of the school, local residents, Head Teachers/Principals, Chairmen of Governors, Groups representing Special Educational Needs interests (e.g. Burgess Autistic Trust, Bromley MENCAP, Bromley Parent Voice), neighbouring Local Authorities, Council Members and other interested parties. The letter summarised the reasons for the Proposal, identified the issues for consideration and explained the arrangements for Consultation. The Consultation was publicised via the school, posters, the Council's website and a News Release. A Consultation meeting for parents/carers was held on 28 January, attracting 29 people. Ward Council Members have been made fully aware of the Proposal and, where received, their views have been summarised in the 'Ward Councillor Views' section of this Report. Those that have responded are in support of the Proposal.

3.5 The Consultation produced 36 responses - hard copies are available to view in the Members' Room and at Civic Centre Reception. There was one respondent against the Proposal, a parent of a pupil at the school. The Governing Body of Glebe School has written in support of the Proposal, stating "The Governing Body believes that the expansion would improve the life chances of every pupil". Bromley Parent Voice (BPV) welcomes and supports the Proposal, but its support is conditional on a number of concerns being addressed and a number of assurances being confirmed – see Appendix 1. Bromley Mencap welcomes the Proposal, although it does have concerns – see Appendix 2. The students of Glebe School were consulted via their School Council which accepted the reasons for expansion and the subsequent increased student numbers, but expressed a number of concerns that will be addressed by the school on an ongoing basis. Of those respondents who are 'Undecided', local residents are unsure about increased traffic/congestion and prospective parents are unsure about the commitment to non-ASD students at the school.

Table 1 - Number of Responses

Agree	27
Disagree	01
Don't Know/Undecided	08
Total	36

Table 2 – Category of Respondents

Category	Agree	Disagree	Do Not Know/ Undecided	Total
Glebe School Governing Body	1	-	-	1
Glebe Parent/Carer	9	1	-	10
Glebe School Council	-	-	1	1
Prospective Parents/Carers	2	-	2	4
Glebe School Staff	1	-	1	2
Local Residents	3	-	4	7
HTs of other schools	3	-	-	3
LBB Council Members[Ø]	2	-	-	2
Bromley Parent Voice*	1	-	-	1
Bromley Mencap+	1	-	-	1
Bromley College of Further & Higher Education	1			1
Other#	3	-	-	3
Total	**27**	**1**	**8**	**36**

Ø	LBB Council Members: Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP, Cllr Jane Beckley
*	Bromley Parent Voice is an Independent Parent Group representing Bromley Parents/Carers of disabled children and children with special educational needs. The parent/carer membership of the Group stood at 351 as at Feb 2013.
+	Bromley Mencap is an independent registered charity working with and on behalf of disabled people. It has over 1500 members.
#	Other comprises: CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service), Chairman of Governors of another school and a Co-Opted Member of Education PDS Committee
***	The provision at the Glebe will provide high quality provision comparable to that provided in other specialist schools in terms of meeting the individual needs of children. We wish to work in partnership with our schools to further develop and enhance the facilities and the teaching in these provisions further with an emphasis on maximising autonomy, independence and potential.

Key Issues Arising from Consultation

3.6 **Key Issue 1:** 27 of the 36 respondents were in favour of the Proposal. The main reasons in favour of the Proposal were:

(i) this provision is needed in order to increase the number of ASD places available In Borough

(ii) reduce the number of Out Borough placements

(iii) the proposal represents good value for money.

Key Issue 2: Bromley Parent Voice's concerns and request for assurances (see Appendix 1).

Key Issue 3: Bromley Mencap's concerns (see Appendix 2)

Response:

As the comments noted from both Bromley Parent Voice and Bromley Mencap overlap on a number of issues the Local Authority's responses are provided in sections below.

Glebe Provision

The proposal for increased places at the Glebe will provide high quality provision comparable to that provided in other specialist schools in terms of meeting the individual needs of children. We wish to work in partnership with our schools to further develop and enhance the facilities and the teaching in these provisions further with an emphasis on maximising autonomy, independence and potential.

Short Breaks

We acknowledge and appreciate the vital role of carers in supporting both children and adults in our community and provide a range of carer support services including short breaks. We recognise that short breaks are highly valued by families providing support to both children and their parents.

Access to short breaks is always based on the assessed need and the outcomes required to meet that need. In Bromley we provide a range of options to carers of both children and adults to meet those needs. These include traditional building based services through to home based short breaks accessed by families through Direct Payments. Many people also use Personal Assistants to support their caring duties which alleviates the pressure on families.

We aim to continue to work very closely with Voluntary Sector Organisations and Parent/Carer representative groups in order to ensure that short break services, in whatever form, are best placed to reduce both the pressures on families as well as providing a positive outcome for the recipient.

Some examples of our investment in services are:

For people aged over 18 with learning disabilities and complex needs we fund a Saturday Club commissioned from Bromley Mencap. This is a fortnightly service that has proved very popular with families and the people attending. An additional 5 places were commissioned in November 2011 in response to increased demand. We have also commissioned a sitting service for 5 families who requested this as an alternative to other forms of short breaks.

The Local Authority wishes to build on Bromley Mencap's success at linking with 'hard to reach' families who may have difficulty or reluctance to access mainstream short breaks services. Furthermore training for staff on complex medical requirements has enabled the service to be more accessible to a wider group of clients.

We have had very positive feedback from families who use the range of services as well as from the Care Quality Commission.

The principal short breaks service for children aged 8-18 years old is our building based service (Hollybank) which provides short term accommodation for up to 13 children at any one time.

Over the past four years we have increased our expenditure on short breaks services for children. This includes a mixed model of short breaks provision. It is true to say that there are increased pressures on our short breaks services as both the numbers of children coming through and the complexity of need is increasing. We are therefore reviewing our short breaks services in order to ensure that they are targeted at those families who are at most risk of emotional, psychological and physical crisis.

In addition there are Saturday and holiday schemes, childminding networks, and an outreach service. A high number of families take Direct Payments to facilitate short breaks provision.

The Council is committed to addressing the needs of carers and providing a range of support to enable people to continue to care for their loved ones.

Children and Families with Exceptional Needs

The Local Authority recognise that there will be a very small number of children with very challenging, complex and enduring needs who may require a higher level of support and a more comprehensive care package than is currently available in borough. We would seek to develop more comprehensive packages for these children in borough where possible but would not discount out of borough provision where appropriate.

Analysis of Needs to inform Planning

Careful analysis of the numbers of children moving through the system and the trends in ASD and other needs were considered. The resulting information along with a range of other factors were considered and these informed officers and Members about the best way forward.

Consideration of needs through detailed analysis of trend data and the cohorts of children demonstrated the considerable growth in ASD diagnosis and the overwhelming need for provision in this area.

There are no plans to bring children back into borough from their current placements unless, through the statutory process parents and professionals agree that this would be the best course of action. The aim is to enable future groups of children progressing through the early key stages to have their needs met in-borough in high quality provision.

Increasing Capacity and Developing the Workforce

Over 75% of pupils within the Glebe have social and communication needs and at least 45% have a diagnosis of Autism. The school has a proven record of meeting the needs of the current pupils and have a very good understanding of ASD, moderate learning difficulties and speech and language needs. The Local Authority will work with the school to ensure it continues to develop and extend the skills and knowledge of a range of needs and in particular ASD. We would not expect these changes to impact negatively in any way on the pupils currently within the school.

3.7 Other matters raised through consultation are summarised at Appendix 3.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Bromley Council has an established policy for the review and strategic planning of school places and related school organisation. The need to ensure sufficient school places and efficiency of organisation is a priority within the Council's Strategy 'Building a Better Bromley' and contributes to the strategy to achieve the status of an Excellent Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 On the 25 July 2012 the Executive agreed a loan from Council reserves of £4.8m to complete the necessary building works to accommodate the expansion of Glebe, which the Dedicated Schools Grant will repay over 6 years. It further agreed that authority to procure the consultancy for the building works be delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources should the cost exceed £500k.

5.2 The costs of educational placements (both maintained and non-maintained and in/out borough) is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the cost of transport through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). By placing children in Glebe rather than out of borough the Council would save £5.8m on DSG and £924k on RSG over a 7 years (cumulative) period. The calculations for the savings totals are detailed in Report ED12015 (the electronic link to the Report is provided on the agenda).

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As part of Section 14 of the Education Act 1996, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that schools in its area are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide education suitable for the different ages, abilities and aptitudes and Special Educational Needs of pupils of school age.

6.2 In accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, statutory consultation must be carried out and considered before an expansion of this size can be carried out.

6.3 There are 5 statutory stages for a statutory proposal for an excepted expansion:

Consultation	Publication	Representation	Decision	Implementation
Not prescribed (minimum of 4 weeks recommended; school holidays should be taken into consideration and avoided where possible)	1 day	**Must** be 4 weeks (or 6 weeks for grammar schools) UNLESS related to another statutory proposal which has a 6 week representation period, then the statutory period will also be 6 weeks for the expansion proposal	LA must decide the proposals within 2 months. No prescribed timescale for the schools adjudicator	No prescribed timescale – but must be as specified in the published notice, subject to any modifications agreed by the Decision Maker

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no immediate implications for staffing arising from this report. Should the proposal for changes to school size and organisation be progressed, Glebe School will require support on an individual basis tailored to its specific staffing structure. Implications may include the grading for the Head Teacher as the Individual School Range may be affected and the number of teaching Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff required to facilitate the curriculum and support the infrastructure.

None Applicable Sections	None
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	1. Committee Report ED12015 – 25/7/12 Executive http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50002353/Development%20of%20Autistic%20Spectrum%20Disorde.pdf 2 Consultation Letter to Parents, Staff, Governors & Local Residents - 11/1/13 3. Circular Letter to Other Interested Parties – 11/1/13 4. Poster advertising the consultation 5. News Release published 14/1/13 6. Notes from Parent/Carer Consultation meeting held on 29/1/13 7. School Council Response to Consultation 8. Consultation Responses (hard copies available to view in Members' Room and at Civic Centre Reception)

APPENDIX 1

CONCERNS RAISED BY BROMLEY PARENT VOICE

The principal areas of concern arising from these proposals which BPV considers must be addressed and clarified as part of any decision to proceed, are in respect of:

1. Short breaks provision

2. In borough residential placements

3. Funding capital costs from DSG funds

4. Demand trends in the support needs of children with other disabilities

5. Staffing levels, staff training and associated resources

6. Placement of children with moderate but complex needs

The assurances given that need to be confirmed as part of any decision to proceed are as follows:

1. The provision at the Glebe will provide a high quality provision comparable to that provided in certain out of borough placements which aims to provide appropriate support in order to maximise longer term autonomy, independence and potential.

2. LBB will seek to provide more comprehensive packages of support in borough (not being limited to that provided at the Glebe) than is currently available, whilst acknowledging that there may be a cohort of children who's needs may be better supported in specialist out of borough placements. As such LBB do not rule out, out of borough placements where appropriate.

3. There are no plans or intention to relocate children at the expanded Glebe from their current out of borough placements unless there are planned transitions agreed by parents and schools concerned through the statutory process of annual review.

APPENDIX 2

CONCERNS RAISED BY BROMLEY MENCAP

(1) Bromley Mencap as an organisation welcomes the proposed expansion and development of specialist provision for children with ASD at Glebe School. However, the development should not wholly be at the expense of specialist Out Borough non-maintained provision. Additionally, some children need and thrive in small specialist units, rather than large schools. This proposed development also has to be considered in the wider context of diagnosis, assessment, school and services available. Support to carers via short breaks and services provided by specialist agencies must also be factored in, if the proposed provision meets needs and is a success for pupils and parents alike.

(2) Comments from Bromley Mencap's parent members have been mixed:

- Acknowledgement that LBB has recognised that the number of children diagnosed with ASD is growing and that for many, specialist provision is required.
- Recognition that Glebe School has expertise in ASD
- Many parents preferred their children to be local and able to attend school from home.
- In Borough provision is not always the best solution over Out Borough non-maintained provision – the emphasis on In Borough provision should not preclude other specialist provision.
- Proposal is primarily financially rather than needs led
- Glebe School is too large to meet the needs of children at the more extreme end the ASD – smaller specialist units are more geared up to meet such needs
- Create a new, small, ASD specific school rather than expand Glebe – more cost-effective in the long term.
- 24hour curriculum is not on offer as part of the new provision at the Glebe.
- The importance of short-breaks provision when children are living at home.
- Provision of suitable transport.
- Concern about the School's ability to respond to some pupils who need one-to-one support or small groups.
- Many parents find the current assessment and diagnosis routes confusing.
- Many parents value the independent information, advice and support provided by organisations such as BAT and Bromley Mencap.

APPENDIX 3

OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM CONSULTATION

(1) Concern that increasing the number of ASD pupils will have an adverse effect on other pupils at the school and on school standards.

Response: There will be no reduction in the provision for other children and their needs will continue to be catered for. The school will continue to cater for children with complex and enduring needs. The school is currently an 'Outstanding' school and there is no reason to believe that the school's standards will reduce as a consequence of admitting additional students.

(2) Increased traffic and parking difficulties.

Response: An additional 16 students will equate to one additional mini-bus. The Buildings Consultant will analyse the traffic impact on the local infrastructure as part of the buildings specification. The school is sensitive to these issues and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

(3) The implications of the school attaining Academy Status.

Response: If a decision to apply for Academy Status was made by the school's Governing Body, the LA would retain statutory responsibility for transport and would continue to work in partnership with the school. The LA would remain committed to the expansion scheme. The school is already a Foundation school, so the pupil admission process will not change.

(4) A respondent would like the school to do more to encourage liaison with local residents to the benefit of the students e.g. helping with the school garden.

(5) A resident whose garden backs onto the school field currently enjoys no disturbance or disruption from students – he would like this to continue.

(6) A respondent would like to see any building plans that are produced – the school has been made aware of this.

(7) A respondent would like to see the creation of an ASD Unit specifically for Girls attached to a secondary school.

(8) While CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service) welcome the Proposal, their main concern would be the likelihood of a significant increase in demand for LBB CAMHS input should it go ahead; the resource implications would then need to be considered in conjunction with CAMHS Commissioners.

(9) A local resident has commented on the good behaviour of Glebe Students and the good work done by the Head Teacher.