



Barrowford Parish Council

Offices

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Response from Barrowford Parish Council to Lancashire County Council's School Place Provision Strategy 2017 / 18 to 2019 / 20 (Draft v0.1)

I am writing on behalf of Barrowford Parish Council and would firstly like to express my thanks for this opportunity to comment on the draft strategy.

Primary

Looking at the Parish's two schools within the Barrowford and Rural Primary Planning Area (Barrowford School and St Thomas CoE) I note that, although St Thomas CoE is slightly over capacity, the reduction in required primary places should result in a surplus by 2022, owing to demographic change.

I was pleased also to note in Section 3 - Projected Demand for Places that housing yield from future housing to be built within the next 5 years is part of the forecast, and that our primary planning area is identified as a hotspot requiring continual monitoring.

You will know that a planning application for 500 houses in the Parish was granted last year and that a condition was put on it by LCC for funding for 82 primary places.

But you may not know that Pendle Council's draft Local Plan Part 2 has proposed allocating a further 230 houses in Barrowford. This has been vigorously opposed by the Parish Council in its consultation response, but clearly should be taken into consideration as part of your monitoring process.

A further consideration is the shortage of space at Barrowford School. The Parish Council's draft Neighbourhood Plan has touched on the possibility of the school being moved to a new site, which would relieve all sorts of problems in the village.

If such a move were to be considered I would be grateful if the Parish Council could be consulted at the earliest possible stage.

Secondary

My understanding is that primary school pupils from Barrowford move on for the most part to:

- Colne Park High School
- Colne Primet Academy
- Fisher More High School, primarily for Catholic pupils
- Pendle Vale.

In Section One of the draft I note that the Education Act puts you under a statutory duty to expand popular and successful schools and also to discontinue maintained schools which, for example, have too many surplus places.

Fisher More and Pendle Vale (both Ofsted: good) have a fairly even balance between capacity and current numbers but I noted with some surprise that Colne Primet Academy (Ofsted: requires improvement) currently has a surplus of nearly two-thirds of its net capacity as compared to Colne Park (Ofsted: good) which has a shortfall of 75.



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Clearly the shortfall in secondary places that is be expected in five years' time will have an effect on increasing take-up of places at Colne Primet, but I would be worried if you were to consider going down the expansion/closure route and would hope you can help to improve Primet's position.

That said, I am unclear as to whether you are in a position to help schools that have converted to academy status, and to impose maximum and minimum numbers on them, as they are no longer under Local Authority control. Are these issues perhaps negotiated between yourselves and the Regional Schools Commissioner?

The situation might get even more complicated as I understand Colne Park is looking to become part of a multi-academy trust.

Finally, I noted with some astonishment in the 'Promote Diversity' section that 'any new school will be a free school', which gives rise to more questions. Is this a legal requirement? Again, what control do you have over a free school once it is set up?

I hope this response is helpful and would welcome a reply to my questions in due course.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Oliver".

Robert Oliver
Chair, Barrowford Parish Council