

# Public Document Pack

## Executive Member Decisions

Friday, 19th August, 2022  
10.00 am

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Date Published: Friday, 19th August, 2022  
Denise Park, Chief Executive

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Digital and Customer Services
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Resources (SIRO)
<b>DATE:</b>	17 August 2022

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Digital and Customer Services
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<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
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<b>SUBJECT: Entering into a contract for Wide Area Network (WAN) and Network refresh</b>
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### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To seek approval from the Executive Member for Digital and Customer Services to award a contract for WAN and Network refresh as well as the associated funding.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

- Approves the award of the contract for the Councils WAN and Network refresh to The Networking People (TNP) for a three year period.
- Approves the increase to the department's annual revenue budget from the 2023/24 financial year of £27k.

### 3. BACKGROUND

#### WAN

The Councils current contract for WAN has now ended, this was provided through TNP on the previous Blackpool framework and was originally installed in 2015. The WAN currently connects 58 schools and 49 Council sites together and is required in order to provide data and internet services, the solution joins up with telephone exchanges as well as linking to Council owned dark fibre circuits, this provides a cost effective method of providing high capacity circuits to outlying sites as they are linked to the exchanges using cheaper, shorter lines. The solution is very flexible allowing the Council to cancel and upgrade circuits when additional bandwidth is required or requirements change. The new contract will see the Council continuing with the existing proven solution for the next three years avoiding Capital expenditure and resources in installing a new network. The department has currently gone out to schools for the supply of the WAN service for the 2023/24 financial year, the current contract with TNP allows the Council to cancel existing circuits as required therefore reducing any financial risks to the Council should schools decide to leave the service.

#### Network Refresh

The Councils services are supported by circa 500 network devices (switches, routers and access points) which are used to connect Council devices to the network. The core network infrastructure is currently out of mainstream vendor support with the department relying on 3rd party support which is only available whilst spare parts are obtainable. The department are often having to be imported from abroad. The

Council originally invested in its core switches in the main data centre in 2011 with Duke Street hardware being installed in 2013 and core network switches in 2015, for outlying sites there has been little investment in this area with switches only being replaced on an adhoc basis when these fail. Due to the future risk in this areas it is proposed that the department will deliver a technologically advanced architecture that is capable of supporting Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Digital Transformation and has been planned for in the Digital Strategy. This is to allow for a fully resilient, operationally efficient and cloud prepared next generation network that will support new digital features and services.

The Digital Strategy 2021 – 2024 work stream 4 identifies the need for secure and resilient technology. Coupled with the ongoing partnership with other agencies, and potential future commitments, the Council needs to be confident that the IT infrastructure can support the substantial reliance on technology.

The refresh will be performed in 4 phases;

Phase 1 – Core Network – Replacement of the main core switches at the Councils data centres and installation of a new network monitoring solution.

Phase 2 – Site Upgrades – Upgrade of all switches and routers at the Councils outlying sites.

Phase 3 – Managed Core Network – Replacement of switches that provide the underlying core network.

Phase 4 – New Internet Pipes - Installation of new increased capacity internet pipes.

The new solution will bring the following benefits;

- Removes significant risk of network outages
- Optimal traffic performance with little complexity
- Easier Management of our networking stack
- It provides the Council with the capacity to scale, evolve and accommodate new technologies whilst providing essential monitoring and management to enable effective troubleshooting.
- Enables the business drivers to increase their offering in to the Internet of Things, Big Data and a greater number of digital services.
- Will allow the Council to continue to offer an infrastructure that allows our ongoing partnership working to flourish.
- Meets the Digital Strategy workstream 4 and allows new levels of resilience to our systems which our citizens and our staff are now reliant upon.

The framework set up by Blackpool Council named Blackburn with Darwen as a participating authority within the tender documents. Under the framework there are set rates for all professional services which are delivered which are well under the industry average. The provision of WAN circuits and the provision of networking equipment are provided on a cost plus basis. The contract is also open book accounting. Given the level of expenditure the Council will audit all costs incurred under the programme.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

Our core network infrastructure is now 'out of vendor support' and requires replacing. If no action is taken to replace these network devices there is a substantial risk that may:

- cause failure and disruption the Council's digital services, CCTV, UTC and Police communication
- Increase the vulnerability of malicious cyber-attacks due to the unavailability of security patches
- present performance degradation due to inability to support the traffic traversing them

The impact of network equipment failure is experienced across all services. Doing nothing as an option ensures the failure of the Council's Digital Transformation Journey and presents a real risk to Council operations . (The Digital Strategy 2021 – 2024 work stream 4 identifies the need for secure and resilient technology.)

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council needs to adopt the Government's Digital Service Strategy whilst delivering its services – making services available to its citizens from anywhere and at any time. Information, Communication and Technology underpins the delivery of the Council's priorities. The Wide Area Network allows remote sites to connect to ICT Services anywhere on the internet.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

### WAN

The Council currently spends £175k per annum providing its internet connectivity and WAN circuits under the current contract. This cost will remain the same under the new contract and is within existing budgets. Under the contract the pricing to the Council changes where the wholesale price changes allowing the Council to benefit from any reductions in costs.

### Network Refresh

#### Capital Costs

The Capital costs for the new solution are below;

	Equipment Costs	Professional Services
Phase 1 – Core Network	£182,272	£14,875
Phase 2 – Site Upgrades	£160,000	£12,375
Phase 3 – Managed Core Network	£44,609	£12,375
Phase 4 – New Internet Pipes	£10,160	£2,500
Total	£397,041	£42,125

The £439k investment will be funded through the existing Network Refresh capital budget of £581k approved by Finance Council for 2022/23. There will be additional costs against the capital budget for internal ICT staff working on the project estimated at £50k.

#### Revenue Implications

The new solution will be provided with a three year software maintenance package costing £23k and a five year hardware maintenance package costing £119.4k, there will also be costs for the new internet pipe of £28.2k, this results in a total annual cost of £59.7k. The department currently has a revenue budget of £32.6k and therefore will require an annual revenue increase of £27k to fund the new solution. This will be factored into the Council's medium financial plan to be funded through growth, should any savings arise within the IT budget then these will be used to fund this instead.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement process used by Blackpool Council complied with the requirements of the Council's Contract and Procurement rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The project will be largely managed by the service provider however there will be a small resource implication for the department which will be factored into existing work plans.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

None with this report, as it is replacing a like for like service.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Peter Hughes</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	21/07/2022
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	None
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## EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



**BLACKBURN**  
with  
**DARWEN**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Children's & Education (DCS)
<b>DATE:</b>	19 August 2022

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** Blackburn Central;

**SUBJECT: EMD Prescribed alteration to a school age range**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposed reduction in age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School with effect from September 2022.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

Approves the reduction in age range at St Michael with St John CE Primary School from 3 to 11 years to 4 to 11 years commencing 1st September 2022.

### 3. BACKGROUND

Blackburn with Darwen has a healthy supply of nursery age provision delivered via a range of providers from across the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors giving parents plentiful choice of provision to meet demand.

Over the last five years, there has been a decrease in the number of families choosing to send their children to nursery due to the rising costs of childcare, the ability to access informal childcare provision through friends and family and increased availability of flexible working arrangements. This alongside a decline in birth rates means that the borough as a whole has an oversupply of nursery age provision. In some areas the oversupply is so significant that early years providers are finding it challenging to remain financially viable.

St Michael with St John CE Primary School is a 1.5 form entry school (315 school places across year groups R – 7) with a 26 place morning only nursery class provision. The school age is 3 – 11 years. This means that the school admits children from nursery age (the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday) until they reach secondary school age. In September 2015, St Michael with St John CE Primary School reduced the nursery provision to morning only delivery due to a significant reduction in the number of families applying for a nursery age place. This change was driven by the need for the school to operate within a balanced budget. Unfortunately this reduced demand has continued to such a level that the school is unable to operate independently without being subsidised from the main school budget.

Within the Blackburn East area there are plans to build 410 new homes over the next 5 years. It is not anticipated that the new housing developments will significantly increase the number of nursery age pupils within the area, however the east locality does have the greatest surplus capacity of available early years places should there be an increase in demand (Appendix 1 - Childcare sufficiency data).

Demographic data (Appendix 2 – Pupil population data) for children aged 1 to 5 years in the St Michael with St John CE Primary School catchment area indicates that the reception intake for the school over the next 3 years will continue to reduce.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

If the proposal is agreed, St Michael with St John CE Primary School will not enrol any children to its nursery class provision that are not already on the school roll or have already secured a place. Places for nursery age children that are already on roll at the school or for those children that are of nursery age and have already secured at place at St Michael with St John CE Primary Schools nursery provision will be honoured.

The proposal will not negatively affect staff currently employed to work at St Michael with St John CE Primary School.

A comparison of the latest pupil occupancy numbers and nursery capacities indicates that Blackburn with Darwen's early years providers currently have 17.9% of places vacant. In the Blackburn Central ward, the percentage vacancy rate is 33.8% which is the highest vacancy rate in the borough.

The reduction in places at St Michael with St John CE Primary School will not have a detrimental effect on the Local Authority being able to meet its statutory duty to secure sufficient early education and childcare places, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment.

Families living within the immediate area may feel that the reduction in the age range of the school is a loss of service provision in their local area, and may be seen as disruptive having to travel to more than one provision should families have a child in both the primary and the early years phase of education. Whilst this may not be the most convenient for families, it is quite typical for families to have to coordinate school drop offs and collections at more than one setting as children move through the different phases of education.

Families may choose a nursery provision on the basis of this securing a future reception class place at the same establishment. Section 1.42 of the Schools Admissions Code 2021 informs that, "Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the early year's pupil premium, the pupil premium, or the service premium who: a) are in a nursery class which is part of the school; or b) attend a nursery that is established and run by the school. The nursery must be named in the admission arrangements and its selection must be transparent and made on reasonable grounds". The admission arrangements for St Michael with St John CE Primary School do not include a criteria for admission based on previous attendance at the school nursery class provision.

The Local Authority operates a Families information Services that provides support ranging from advice and guidance for families about childcare and early education to bespoke services including meeting with families and working with them to source and secure suitable childcare arrangements. This service will work closely with St Michael and St John CE primary School to ensure that any families requiring support with regards to childcare and early education receive it in a timely manner. The service does not actively promote any one early years setting but aims to give families information about individuals providers services, e.g. operational hours, Ofsted inspection grades

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating a nursery provision where the expenditure is greater than its income will prejudice the efficient use of resources within the main school budget.

Reducing the age range at St Michael with St John CE Primary School from 3 to 11 years to 4 to 11 years will improve the financial viability for the school allowing them the ability to work with a managed budget.

If the nursery was to continue running in its current form, it is anticipated that circa of £13,000 would be needed from the main school budget to subsidise the nursery budget in 2022-2023 financial year. Longer term pupil forecasting suggests a continuation of reduced pupil demand, which would put increased pressure on the main school budget if the nursery class was to remain open. As the school is not sitting on a large reserve this has the potential to push the school budget into a deficit within the next 3 years.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient early education and childcare places, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment.

The current position advises that Blackburn with Darwen has a significant over-supply of early education and childcare places to meet demand (Appendix 1 - Childcare sufficiency data).

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Will be met by existing internal resource.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

**Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

The 'Making Significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to Maintained Schools 2018' informs that Blackburn with Darwen as the Admission Authority for St Michael with St John CE Primary School are not required to undertake statutory consultation to make a change to the age range of the school. However in the interests of good practice the local authority undertook a consultation to seek views from parents, carers and other interested stakeholders on the proposal (See appendices 3, 4 & 5).



Overall the local authority received 7 responses for this consultation. 5 of the responses supported the proposal, 2 did not support the proposal, with the overriding concern being the challenge of coordinating school drop offs and collections at more than one setting.

The Local Authority has statutory responsibility to provide advice and support for families with regards to securing suitable childcare/early education provision. Blackburn with Darwen Councils Families Information Services (FIS) is able to offer bespoke services including meeting with families and working with them to source and secure suitable childcare/early education arrangements. The service will ensure that all families that have previously applied for a nursery place at St Michael with St John Primary School are offered these bespoke services.

**11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

**12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Sarah Anderson, Carol Grimshaw, Head of Service, School System Support</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	<p>Appendix 1 – Childcare sufficiency data</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Pupil population data</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Proposed SMSJ Age Range Reduction Consultation</p> <p>Appendix 4 - Consultation Outcomes</p> <p>Appendix 5 - Stakeholder List</p>

## Sufficiency of childcare places by ward for children aged 0-5 years

FTE = 50 hour full time equivalent childcare place

Of the 125 early education and childcare providers that offer places for children aged 0-5 years, 87% returned their vacancy data for Summer Term 2022:

- = Under-supply of vacancies
- = Healthy supply of vacancies
- = Over-supply of vacancies
- = Over-saturated supply of vacancies

Ward	FTE Places Offered	FTE Places Occupied	% Places Occupied	FTE Vacant Places	% Vacant Places
Audley & Queen's Park	151.8	111.9	73.7%	39.9	26.3%
Bastwell & Daisyfield	27.8	26.0	93.5%	1.8	6.5%
Billinge & Beardwood	160.1	145.9	91.1%	14.2	8.9%
Blackburn Central	235.9	156.1	66.2%	79.8	33.8%
Blackburn South & Lower Darwen	218.9	196.6	89.8%	22.2	10.2%
Blackburn South East	265.9	206.7	77.7%	59.2	22.3%
Darwen East	141.9	105.9	74.7%	36.0	25.3%
Darwen South	147.0	144.5	98.3%	2.5	1.7%
Darwen West	188.5	152.4	80.8%	36.1	19.2%
Ewood	135.8	105.3	77.5%	30.6	22.5%
Little Harwood & Whitebirk	70.5	55.0	78.0%	15.5	22.0%
Livesey with Pleasington	130.9	89.8	68.6%	41.1	31.4%
Mill Hill & Moorgate	209.5	192.5	91.9%	16.9	8.1%
Roe Lee	60.3	56.1	93.2%	4.1	6.8%
Shear Brow & Corporation Park	447.1	368.4	82.4%	78.7	17.6%
Wensley Fold	63.3	61.8	97.6%	1.5	2.4%
West Pennine	97.8	85.8	87.7%	12.1	12.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2752.9</b>	<b>2260.7</b>	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>492.2</b>	<b>17.9%</b>

## Pupil population of children aged 1 to 5 years old

The table below details a breakdown of children aged 1 to 5 by ward as at 31 August 2021 (*NHS Digital from the NHS Primary Care Registration (Demographic) database*):

Ward	Age 1	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4
Audley & Queen's Park	280	384	308	328
Bastwell & Daisyfield	234	232	250	268
Billinge & Beardwood	252	230	292	264
<b>Blackburn Central</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>308</b>
Blackburn South & Lower Darwen	148	160	194	196
Blackburn South East	232	280	306	312
Darwen East	204	258	248	234
Darwen South	160	156	224	178
Darwen West	144	148	158	188
Ewood	236	236	220	284
Little Harwood & Whitebirk	304	304	318	352
Livesey with Pleasington	158	148	144	174
Mill Hill & Moorgate	234	254	228	244
Roe Lee	264	328	294	310
Shear Brow & Corporation Park	282	314	246	320
Wensley Fold	304	332	294	342
West Pennine	126	138	148	152
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3834</b>	<b>4186</b>	<b>4172</b>	<b>4454</b>

# Consultation on a proposed reduction in age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School with effect from September 2022



## Why are we consulting?

The 'Making Significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to Maintained Schools 2018' informs that Blackburn with Darwen as the Admission Authority for St Michael with St John CE Primary School are not required to undertake statutory consultation to make a change to the age range of the school. However in the interests of good practice the local authority is keen to hear parents, carers and other interested stakeholders views on the proposal.

## Requirements for notification and publication

The 'Making Significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to Maintained Schools 2018' can be found at: [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools-2018.pdf)

## Background

The current age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School is 3 to 11 years old. This means that the school admits children from nursery until they reach secondary school age.

Blackburn with Darwen has always had a healthy supply of nursery age provision across private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors giving parents plentiful choice of provision to meet demand.

Over the last five years, there has been a decrease in the number of families choosing to send their children to nursery alongside a decline in births means that the borough as a whole is overly-saturated with nursery age places creating financial instability for many nursery providers.

In September 2015, St Michael with St John CE Primary School reduced the nursery provision to morning only delivery due to a significant reduction in the number of families applying for a nursery age place. This reduction in demand has continued and reduced to a level that means the school budget is being negatively impacted on and the nursery on its own without being subsidised from the main school budget is financially unviable.

The school also in September 2019, reduced the number of school age places due to a fall in demand and to enable them to manage with a balanced budget.

## Demographic information

**Housing** – Within the Blackburn East area there are plans to build 410 new homes over the next 5 years. It is not anticipated that the new housing developments will significantly increase the number of nursery age pupils within the area.

**Population** – Demographic data for children aged birth to 3 years in the St Michael with St John CE Primary School catchment area indicates that the intake for the school over the next 3 years will continue to reduce.

## Specific proposal

The Local Authority, as the Admissions Authority for St Michael with St John CE Primary School, proposes to reduce age range of the school from 3-11 to 4-11 with effect from September 2022.

This means that St Michael with St John CE Primary School will not enrol any children to its nursery class provision that are not already on the school roll or have already secured a place. Places for nursery age children

that are already on roll at the school or those children that are of nursery age and have secured a place at St Michael with St John CE Primary School will be honoured.

This proposal will not negatively affect staff currently employed to work at St Michael with St John CE Primary School.

The Local Authority, as the Admissions Authority, will consider any views from the consultation exercise before making any decision on the proposal.

### Who are we consulting with?

During this consultation period we want to seek views from:

- Parents and carers of children already attending the school;
- Parents and carers of children that have been offered a school place commencing Sept 2022;
- School staff;
- Trade Unions;
- School Governors;
- Primary, Infant and Junior Schools (including any associated Academy Trust) in Blackburn with Darwen;
- Blackburn & Salford Diocese;
- Early Years Providers in Blackburn with Darwen;
- Councillors and MP's;
- Relevant Local Authority Departments

### Timetable for the consultation period

13 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Start of consultation
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2022	End of consultation period/Deadline for submitting views to the Local Authority
4 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	Analysis of consultation views and preparation of information to be considered by the LA
15 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	Executive Member Decision meeting to consider views and agree future arrangements
26 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	Headteacher to present the consultation outcomes and the LA's decision to St Michael with St John CE Primary School Governing Body.

### When would any changes come into effect?

If a decision to reduce the age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School is agreed and approved, the arrangements would be introduced from September 2022 onwards.

### How to Respond

This consultation will run from 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 (a period of 3 school weeks). You are invited to submit views in writing about the proposal above to the Local Authority. You can share your views via this online form <https://forms.office.com/r/LmR3cpTAmQ>, or send by post to the **Early Years Development and Childcare Team, Ground Floor, 10 Duke Street, Blackburn, BB2 1DH.**

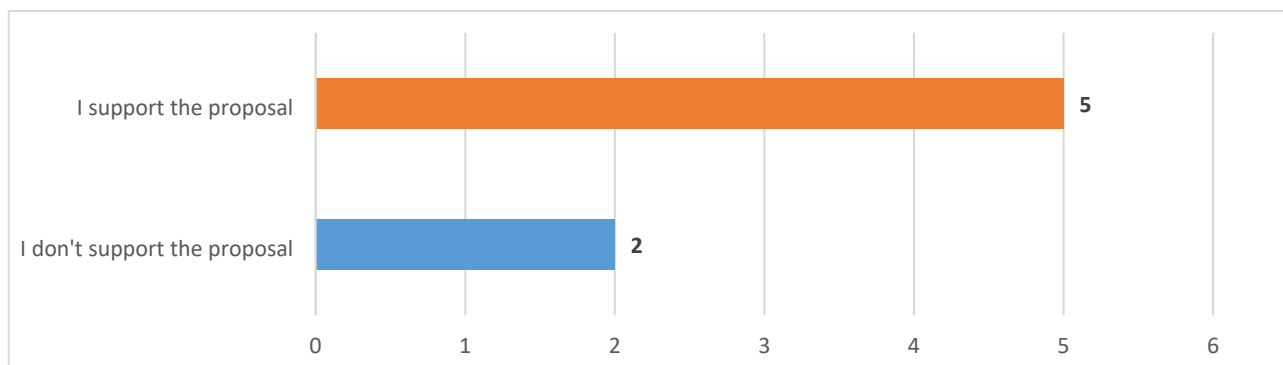
All views must be received by 3pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022. Views received after this specified time and date will not be considered.

For further information please contact the Early Years Development and Childcare Team at [earlyyears.funding@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears.funding@blackburn.gov.uk).

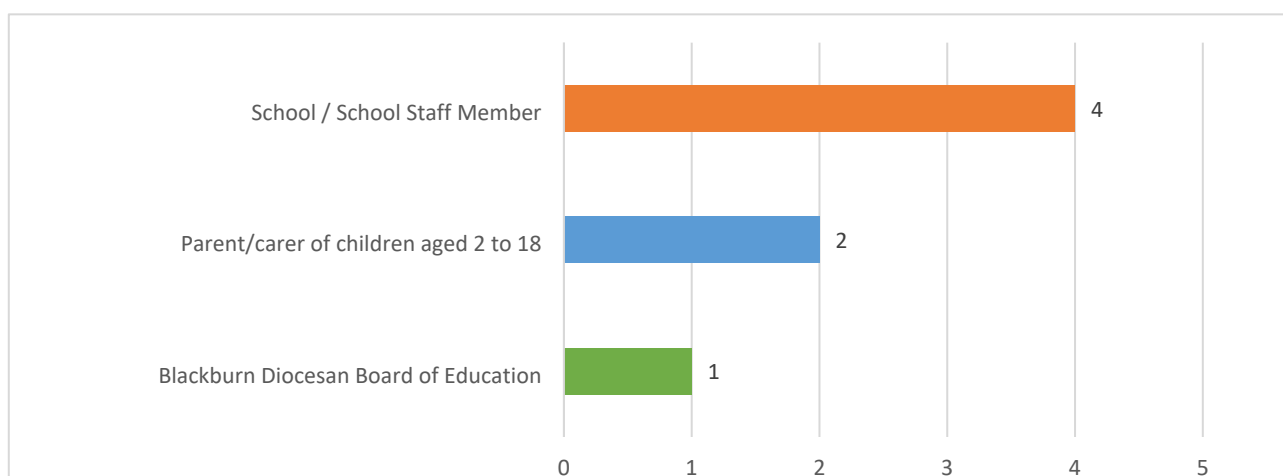
## Proposed reduction in age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School 2022/23

Overall the local authority received 7 responses for this consultation. The following charts detail the responses to the proposed reduction in age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School.

**1. The Local Authority, as the Admissions Authority for St Michael with St John CE Primary School, proposes to reduce the age range of the school from 3-11 to 4-11 with effect from September 2022. How do you feel about the proposed change?**



**2. Which of the following best describes you?**



**3. Please tell us the reason for your views, or write any other comments on this proposal.**

1	Low numbers in the nursery have resulted in less funding. The cost of staffing the nursery exceeds the funding received by the school.
2	Unfortunately, the nursery is not financially viable.
3	This will help the budget and allows the school to progress with 4-11 yr olds.
4	<p>I writing to let you know I oppose the decision to the closure of the Nursery class of St Michael St John school in September 2022 for the following reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I have a child already attending this Nursery since September 2021</li> <li>- I have another child enrolled onto the same school nursery for September 2022</li> <li>- it's very closer to my house</li> <li>- My entire family has been attending this Nursery and school ... so I have a very good understanding and trustful relationship and the school Nursery has a great curriculum and great teachers</li> <li>- I myself work at St Michael St John as a welfare assistant</li> </ul>

- This school is across the road from my house and there is no other suitable nurseries for my child to attend near me
- I will have the hurtful decision to move my first Child because I will not be able to take 2 of my children to 2 different schools at the same time as my husband is full time working and I also will have to leave my job at this school too. As the cost of living is rising by the minute and I cannot afford the taxi fare to different schools further away from me
- If this decision goes against me then I will have to make my child miss the full year of Nursery and this will further delay my Childs overall development
- I received an email from school yesterday regarding this matter which I'm very disappointed because this school has cared for children in this community and when its come to my turn and the Nursery is closing which is very unfair because it puts me into a difficult position and I will have to encounter the hardships including emotional stress.
- I am aware there are other children already attending this Nursery and will carry on attending in the following year, I am not afraid to protest for my childrens educational rights
- this school has been very supportive and Nurturing towards not just mine but all the children involved.

I sincerely expect the Blackburn with Darwen Borough to take my heartfelt plea to keep this Nursey open or keep my child in this school as I enrolled her before all this decision regarding closure came about.

I am very grateful if you consider my plea and my application as I am very stressed and worried for my children's education and the outcome for this decision.

**5** I refer to the recent consultation on the reduction of school admission from age 3 to age 4 at St Michael with St John Primary (SMSJ).

I understand that this proposal has been precipitated by the reduction in demand and there are always financial considerations due to finite resources.

Whilst I fear that the decision has already been taken and no amount of objection will convince the admission authority to do otherwise. I still feel it necessary to record my stringent objection to this proposal for the following reasons:

1. I am surprised that a child is expected to join full time school without a part time transition period which nursery offered. Whilst some may suggest obtaining an alternative nursery this is not practical because I have a child who already attends SMSJ. It is therefore practically impossible for me to drop my children off at different locations.
2. I currently have a child for whom I accepted a reception place at SMSJ. I have other younger children including a 3 year old for whom I had applied for a nursery place at SMSJ to start in September 2022. The late notification of this proposal to change the admission age has left me at a disadvantage as I could have applied at a different school who could accommodate all my children together.
3. I have always found SMSJ staff to be helpful and offer a safe fun and creative learning environment for children. I would like my younger children to continue taking advantage of the nursery.

## Consultation on a proposed reduction in age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School with effect from September 2022

### Stakeholder List

Stakeholder	Communication method
Parents and carers of children already attending the school	Letter/Email/School Website
Parents and carers of children that have been offered a school place commencing Sept 2022	Letter/Email/School Website
Parents and carers of any other children aged from birth to 18	Local authority website
School staff	Letter/Email/School Website
Trade Unions	Letter/Email/School Website
School Governors	Letter/Email/School Website
Primary, Infant and Junior Schools (including any associated Academy Trust) in Blackburn with Darwen	Consultation document/response form via email
Blackburn & Salford Diocese	Consultation document/response form via email
Early Years Providers in Blackburn with Darwen	Consultation document/response form via email
Children's Services and Education SPT	Meeting



## EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Children's & Education (DCS)
<b>DATE:</b>	17 August 2022

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Children, Young People and Education

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** (All Wards);

**SUBJECT: Procurement process for the accommodation based service for vulnerable families**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To note that the provision of the accommodation based service for vulnerable families will be retendered due to the current contract coming to an end. The service provides accommodation and support to prevent vulnerable young parents and their families from experiencing homelessness, to promote independence and to positively move parents into independent accommodation.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

- Approves the proposed strategy for the procurement and the commencement of a tendering and procurement activity to offer this service to the wider market. The contract will commence on the 1st of November 2022 and will be awarded for 3 years with an option to extend for a further two years on a 1 + 1 year basis. The extension will be subject to satisfactory delivery which will be monitored via robust contract review processes.
- Delegate's authority to the Strategic Director Children's and Education in consultation with the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education to award the final contract following the procurement process.

### 3. BACKGROUND

The Local Authority funds a range of Supported People and housing related support services aimed at enabling people who need help to develop independent living skills or maintain independence in the community, either in accommodation services or in a person's own home regardless of tenure.

The parents served by this provision have often been at risk or experiencing multiple vulnerabilities for example endured family breakdown, domestic violence, sexual assault, homelessness, financial difficulties, and physical or mental ill health.

In addition to providing accommodation, the service will also work alongside parents to help them understand the developmental needs of their child and offer parenting support and support families to better manage their and their children's' emotional health and wellbeing and physical health.

The service will provide accommodation for a maximum of 12 months, however it is noted accommodation length may be extended for young parents who are 16 will be unable to obtain a tenancy until they are 18. During this time the provider will:

- Stabilise the crisis situation.
- Work with the service user, housing needs, children's services and other agencies to secure an exit from the service.
- Develop the service users' capacity to live and parent independently in the community and have the skills to maintain a tenancy.

The current contract has been in place since the 1st April 2017 and is with Caritas Dioceses of Salford. The organisation provides five units of single parent with their child/ren accommodation and one unit for a larger family based service.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

The service will be located within the geographical area of Blackburn with Darwen with the service provider being responsible for the maintenance costs of any buildings occupied for delivering services, which includes fittings, equipment, repairs and alterations. The provider will be responsible for any costs associated with the replacement of furniture, maintenance and calibration of equipment and the safe disposal of the same, and provide consumables required for the smooth operation of the building.

The tender documentation, contract and service specification will incorporate details to ensure that the successful provider will adhere to quality standards and legal requirements to promote timely decisions regarding the appropriate placement of young children who are subject to care proceedings.

The procurement process will be an Open Tender process will be carried out via The Chest with the procurement opportunity being available to all suppliers. Due diligence checks will be carried out to ensure all providers meet the minimum accreditation and ethical requirements.

The tender will be evaluated with quality questions which will provide 80% of the total evaluation criteria with word limits stated within each question. Twenty percent of the score will be allocated to the financial submission. The evaluation panel will be made up of representatives from the children's commissioning team, contracting and procurement and the housing need team.

The service will be advertised as a full tender to comply with Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

TUPE transfer implications will be considered as part of the process.

#### 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Each child who has been referred into local authority children's social care should have an individual assessment to identify their needs and to understand the impact of any parental behaviour on them as an individual. Local authorities have to give due regard to a child's age and understanding when determining what (if any) services to provide under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

The need to assess can also include pre-birth situations when a mother's own circumstances would give cause for concern that the pre-birth, and then born, child would come within the definition of being a 'child in need'.

The EIA checklist has been completed.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The allocation of funding in relation to this tender and future contract arrangements has been kept in line with the projected Children's Social Care budget.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council will pay the successful provider up to £140,000 per year, on a block contract.

Total cost for contract	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2022 to 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2023 to 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2024	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2025	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2025 to 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2026 to 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2026
£700,000	Up to £140,000	Up to £140,000	Up to £140,000	Up to £140,000	Up to £140,000

#### 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

If the provider takes out a lease that is longer than the initial 3 year duration of the contract with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, then this would be the providers' own financial liability.

An open tender process will be followed to ensure this tender attracts providers with sufficient knowledge and expertise to enable quality delivery. The tendering process will need to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations and the Council's Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules. Contracts will be in a form approved by legal officers in the contracts and procurement team.

#### 7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The management and implementation of the tender will be actioned within Blackburn with Darwen team resources including input from Legal, Finance, Strategic Commissioning and Children's Social Care

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1  X Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultation with Blackburn with Darwen Children's Services and the current provider (Caritas Care )

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Cathy Fisk 01</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	
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