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Partnership Learning

**Consultation on Proposal for Riverside Bridge School to expand its provision onto a second site on Thames Road, Barking**

**1.0 Introduction**

As a result of the continuing increased need for special school places in the local authority, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has made a request to Partnership Learning (the academy trust that oversees the school) for Riverside Bridge School to expand its provision. It is proposed to expand Riverside Bridge School’s roll by 90 students, phased over the next three years, and accommodate them on what is known as the City Farm site on Thames Road, Barking.

This document sets out the opportunities for interested parties to give their views on the proposals outlined in more detail below.

**2.0 Riverside Bridge School**

Riverside Bridge School is a day special school in Barking and Dagenham which opened in 2015, serving the special educational needs of young people ranging from 4 years of age to 16 years of age, with a maximum legal capacity of 180 pupils. The school will be operationally full from September 2022.

The school is based on Riverside Campus on the Barking Riverside development, which is also home to Riverside Primary School and Riverside Secondary School.

The school is part of the Partnership Learning multi-academy trust, which oversees thirteen schools in Barking and Dagenham, neighbouring boroughs and Southend-on-Sea.

**3.0 Background**

All the current state-funded special school provisions in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham are full, or will be by September 2022, for pupils with ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty and PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty.

However, the local authority has identified a continuing rise in demand for places in special schools and is therefore proposing the actions outlined in this document to provide a rapid increase in capacity.

**4.0 Proposals for the expansion of Riverside Bridge School onto a second site on Thames Road, Barking**

The proposal currently being consulted upon is for Riverside Bridge School to increase its pupil numbers by 90, leading to a new maximum legal capacity of 270 pupils, by expanding onto a second site on Thames Road, Barking.

4.1 Pupil Profile

The needs profile of the additional pupils would remain as current – a mix of ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty and PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty. The age range of the additional pupils would also be within the current range of 4-16 years.

It is proposed to phase the increase in pupil numbers over three years, with approximately 30 additional pupils each year, beginning in September 2022.

4.2 Organisation and Leadership

The expanded provision on the Thames Road site would be fully integrated into the leadership and management structure of Riverside Bridge School - following the same curriculum, staffing model, policies and procedures – to ensure exactly the same high-quality provision as currently provided. There would be an appropriate expansion in staffing to provide effectively for the increased pupil numbers.

4.3 Effect on existing provision at Riverside Bridge School

The phased, gradual approach to the increase in pupil numbers - over three years - coupled with appropriate expansion of staffing to provide for them, will ensure that there are no negative effects on existing provision at Riverside Bridge School. The efficient implementation of the expansion will be helped by the close proximity of the two sites and by the fact that the school has strong, well-established structures and systems that can be efficiently extended to the new provision.

4.4 Premises and Facilities

The expanded provision is proposed to be housed in existing school buildings on what is known as the ‘City Farm site’ at 40 Thames Road, Barking. This site is only half a mile from the current Riverside Bridge School - five minutes by car.

The City Farm school building previously housed Riverside Bridge School, very successfully, in its first year of operation. The building is well-designed as a flexible school provision, having also housed at various times both primary and secondary schools.

The City Farm school building will be adapted, remodelled and resourced to ensure that the needs of the expanded pupil intake are fully met.

**5.0 The Consultation Process**

5.1 Key Dates for the Consultation

Consultation Period Starts: Monday 21st March 2022

Drop-in Consultation Event:

Riverside Bridge School, Renwick Road, Barking IG11 0FU

Tuesday 29th March 2022 3.00 – 6.00pm

Consultation Period Ends: 12 noon on Friday 8th April 2022

5.2 Actions following on from the Consultation

Partnership Learning will read and consider all responses received.

The Trust will produce a summary of the responses to the consultation, which will be published on their website: www.partnershiplearning.com

The Trust hopes to be able to address comments received and will explain in the summary on their website how they have tried to do this and how they intend to take into account in their plans the comments received.

The summary will be submitted to the Department for Education in order to inform their decision on whether to approve the proposed expansion.

**6.0 How to contact us and find out more**

You may find out more about the proposals by visiting the Trust or school websites:

[www.partnershiplearning.com](http://www.partnershiplearning.com)

[www.riversidecampus.com/bridge/](http://www.riversidecampus.com/bridge/)

or by emailing Partnership Learning, at:

office@partnershiplearning.com

You are also invited to attend an informal drop-in Consultation Event, to give your views or ask questions, at Riverside Bridge School, Renwick Road, Barking IG11 0FU on Tuesday 29th March 2022 at any time between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

**7.0 Consultation Questions**

The purpose of this consultation is to ascertain the views of interested persons on the proposal for Riverside Bridge School to expand its provision onto a second site on Thames Road, Barking.

You are therefore invited to give your views on the questions of:

1. Do you think it is a good idea that Riverside Bridge School should expand its provision by 90 places onto a second nearby site, in order to help meet the increased local demand for special school places?

2. What are your views on the proposed location for the expansion?

3. Do you have any further comments on any of the proposals outlined in this consultation document?

You may send your views and comments at any time during the consultation period to the following email address:

[office@partnershiplearning.com](mailto:office@partnershiplearning.com)

or by post to:

Chief Executive,

Partnership Learning,

Parsloes Avenue

Dagenham

RM9 5QS

You may also give your views in person at a drop-in Consultation Event at at Riverside Bridge School, Renwick Road, Barking IG11 0FU on Tuesday 29th March 2022 at any time between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

Alternatively, or in addition, you may wish to respond by answering the questions in the Consultation Questionnaire below and sending your answers by email or post to the addresses above.

**8.0 Consultation Questionnaire**

***1. Do you think it is a good idea that Riverside Bridge School should expand its provision by 90 places onto a second nearby site, in order to help meet the increased local demand for special school places?***

**Yes □ No □**

**Further Comments:**

***2. What are your views on the proposed location for the expansion?***

**Comments:**

***3. Do you have any further comments on any of the proposals outlined in this consultation document?***

**Appendix 1 Consultation Summary**

***This is a summary - for full consultation document visit:*** [*www.partnershiplearning.com*](http://www.partnershiplearning.com)

**Consultation**

A consultation is currently underway regarding proposals to expand Riverside Bridge School’s roll by 90 students, phased over the next three years, and accommodate them on what is known as the City Farm site on Thames Road, Barking, following a request from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to Partnership Learning (the academy trust that oversees the school).

**Background**

All the current state-funded special school provisions in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham are full, or will be by September 2022, for pupils with ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty and PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty. However, the local authority has identified a continuing rise in demand for places in special schools and is therefore proposing the actions outlined in this consultation to provide a rapid increase in capacity.

**The Consultation Process**

Consultation Period Starts: Monday 21st March 2022

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You may find out more about the proposal by visiting Partnership Learning website –www.partnershiplearning.com - or by emailing Partnership Learning, at: [office@partnershiplearning.com](mailto:office@partnershiplearning.com)

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