



## Public Sector Equality Duty – Delivery of the Baytree Special School Buildings

The Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

Consideration has been given within this Baytree School Expansion Project to how different people with protected characteristic under the equality duty, will be affected by the proposed expansion throughout the project. The protected characteristics considered are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- sex
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- pregnancy and maternity

Discussions have occurred within project meetings and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and will be updated at key stages throughout the project process.

During the public expansion consultation, a specific question was included in the questionnaire asking if stakeholders had any equality issues they wanted to raise. During each consultation event covering multiple stakeholders, those present were asked that if they had any concerns regarding equality. They could make these known to us directly or by writing on a designated notepad. No direct concerns were raised.

Within the expansion consultation only one equalities issue was raised for an individual. This was in relation to the anticipated loss of access to the proposed site to a local resident who is identified as having a protected characteristic of **disability**. Others who could be affected are children or older people who could suffer as a result of a loss of play space or the use of a nearby facility for, for example, dog walking. It is considered the impact on those who would benefit from the creation of a new site could be argued to provide overall a greater benefit than the loss to the person with a protected characteristic or to other young or older neighbours who, on the whole, have not stated explicitly they have an EIA concern or category.

The consultation did however confirm that the nature of the needs of the pupils to attend the school must be allowed for in any design and expansion location. The equality of opportunity for pupils to be able to access all learning areas of the school (inside and out) and move easily across the site has influenced its single-storey design on a flat site with doors, sliding where appropriate, to allow full wheel-chair access and as a non-negotiable. The school will not be exclusively for wheelchair users, but it needs to allow for equal access and accessibility for this group of learners. It is the aim that the pupils at school will be in a coherent peer group to learn with in the right learning environment and locality.

The site has been chosen as it is part of an existing community. This will allow pupils to walk or be assisted to access shops and other nearby amenities as part of their curriculum offer without the need always for vehicle journeys into a town. The school will be a member of the family of schools in Clevedon. The Clevedon location is central within the district to ensure parity, as far as possible, for those travelling to and from school in a location that can be accessible due to its road network links.

The design will significantly enhance the learning opportunities for all the pupils through the delivery of a purpose built, enabling and adaptive environment with a range of specialist rooms including Sensory Rooms, Hydrotherapy Pool and life skills space etc. The new provision will also support and enhance the wellbeing of staff and pupils through the use of specialist equipment such as overhead tracking hoists, sunken trampolines and sliding doors. The colours, surface finishes and textures used within the site will be influenced by the learning and sensory needs of its pupils.

Pupils at Baytree School have support and input from a range of professionals including Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Disability Nurses etc. The creation of the new provision will enhance the partnership working and enable pupils' better access to these services through the creation of the right environments including a Specialist Physiotherapy room and visiting Therapist office spaces. Clevedon is also the location of the district's specialist early years provider, Springboard. The school and Council officers work closely with this organisation when assessing the needs of pupils before entering specialist provisions and when they transition to school. It is intended the new site will have facilities available to Springboard to further enhance this essential partnership.

In addition to the above, due regard has been given to the characteristics of **pregnancy and maternity** by enabling the use of rooms within the site for rest during pregnancy or for expressing milk if required.

The respect of the protected characteristic of **religion or belief** – which includes lack of belief, have been taken into account within the project. The school is experienced in providing spaces for reflection and remembrance. Whilst, for safeguarding reasons, a room away from the hub of the school will not be provided, rooms and an outdoor space within the school can be made available as required provision for prayer, reflection, quiet contemplation and the remembrance of those no longer with us.

The creation of a new school site in Clevedon will remove access to the site from the local community. Consideration was given during the project to those locally who

could be affected due to their **age**. This includes children who may play on the site or older people who may access the site for, for example, walking their dog. Again, it is considered the impact on those who would benefit from the creation of a new site could be argued to provide overall a greater benefit than the loss to those who may be able to use other local amenities for these activities. The school site needs to be at least 2ha in size to provide sufficient space for all the indoor and outdoor spaces required for the pupils it serves. The site at Brookfield Walk is 1.9ha. Consideration was given to not including one area of land adjacent to the homes and its bordering field so this could be retained for community use. Regrettably this would remove necessary play space for the school that cannot be located elsewhere due to the need to provide drainage swales and to keep site material within this location for environmental reasons. Asking Clevedon Town Council for a land swap of the Community Orchard for this area of land was also considered. The trees are a natural resource open to the whole community. Whilst the pupils would and can have access to them, the area would not provide the play space needed for the school. For this reason, a land swap was not pursued.

For children there is a playground in Cherry Avenue, 0.3 miles and 6 minutes walking time from the Brookfield walk site. Teignmouth Road playground is 0.4 miles and a 7 minutes walking time away from the area. The football pitches and play area at the end of Hazell Close / Homeground are 0.7 miles and 14 minutes walking time from the site and Clevedon Rugby ground is 0.8m away and a 16 minutes walking time from this location. Other nearby open spaces include the Coleridge Vale Road and Churchill Avenue play areas that are 1.1m away and 22 minutes walking time from the site. When discussing the loss of space at public meetings and when visiting the site it would appear many of the children locally will play away from this site on the nearby roads.

For dog walkers there is a public right of way adjacent to Brookfield Walk development next to a local rhyne. It is used, along with a neighbouring field that borders the site, for activities such as running and dog walking. The development that includes Hazell Close is a popular area for leisure activities including running and dog walking. This is less than a mile away from this site. Norton Woods are also under a mile from the site. This is a popular area for dog walkers and for families, although it is noted that in certain areas of Norton Woods dogs must be kept in their lead.

The expansion of Baytree school onto a second site, is not considered to adversely affect the other protected characteristics.

Further information relating to the project can be found in the links below:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/baytreeschoolexpansion>

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Baytree-consultation-key-facts-and-figures.pdf>

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Education-Provision-in-North-Somerset-a-commissioning-strategy.pdf>,

<http://consult.n->

[somerset.gov.uk/consult/ti/Expansion\\_of\\_Baytree\\_School/consultationHome](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/consult/ti/Expansion_of_Baytree_School/consultationHome)

<http://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc29644.pdf>