

Supporting narrative for the application

Bilal mosque has been operating in the area since 1999. Since its opening it has been providing vital facilities and services to the Muslim communities of Prestwich, Whitefield and other neighbourhoods nearby.

Over the last 20 years Muslim population in area has steadily increased and we are glad to say it has gradually more diversified. It is also encouraging to see that during period the council has also launched a number of equality strategies and now more recently its inclusion strategy.

Whilst the Muslim population in south Bury has increased, Bilal mosque remains as the only place of worship in the area. The mosque also provides critical religious education for the younger population. These classes are normally held after school hours, numbers of which have also steadily increased.

We have been previously applied successfully to provide temporary buildings, allowing us to cater for additional demand for children's educational services. Whilst this has provided temporary mitigation for the increasing demand, it has satisfied the immediate requirements of local communities.

The challenge however remains that these buildings are not a permanent solution and neither are these facilities sufficient to satisfy the needs to this growing community. However even as an interim we need to ensure that these facilities are fit for purpose and safe for the children to use.

In order to provide safe welfare facilities for the children, we need to create segregated toilet facilities for children. Currently in the evenings when children classes are held there are normally prayers times during the period, where general public attends the mosque. During these periods whilst we have staff to supervise the children, we are concerned that there are separate welfare facilities for the children. Which means that male's adults and children are required to use the same toilets?

We need to build a small toilet facility at the back of the mosque which will then provide separate toilets for girls and boys.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that the permission requested is for a 3 year temporary permission, it is our plan that during this period we will prepare and submit an application for a permanent solution. We need this temporary permission so we can continue to serve the community during this period and submit a robust sustainable solution for this location.

Bury Council leadership of the Strategic Commissioning Board, made a commitment to significant improvements in our equalities and inclusion practice as both an employer and service provider/commissioner.