

**REPORT FOR: EDUCATION STRATEGY
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

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| Date of Meeting: | 3 December 2012 |
| Subject: | School Organisation |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Catherine Doran, Corporate Director of Children and Families |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Mitzi Green, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families |
| Exempt: | No |
| Decision subject to Call-in: | No |
| Enclosures: | Appendix A: Demographic Information School Roll Projections 2013 – 2022 Report |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the progress to date to meet the increased demand for primary school places, the approach to developing the second phase of the primary school expansion programme, the latest school roll projections, and the proposed review of the approach to achieving the Local Authority's preferred model of primary school organisation.

Recommendations:

The Education Strategy Consultative Forum is requested to note the report and offer any comments or suggestions about the preferred model of primary school organisation.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To support the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties to provide sufficient school places in its area as part of its strategic role as champion for parents and families, for vulnerable pupils and of educational excellence.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for its area. There are several key strands to delivering sufficient school places as an increasing pupil population impacts across primary, secondary and special school provision. The focus of this report is on the primary school expansion strategy. The increased demand for places will progress into the secondary sector from 2016, though the impact will not be felt immediately because of the capacity that is currently available in Year 7. A report on the Special School Special Educational Needs (SEN) Placements Planning Framework was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 October 2012. Cabinet agreed the aims and guiding principles for the Framework, and approved a wide stakeholder engagement and consultation be undertaken to develop options to increase provision.
2. The role of the Local Authority is changing in light of the Government's education reforms. The Local Authority increasingly has a strategic role to commission services rather than to be a provider. Schools are encouraged by the Government to become autonomous and more removed from direct local authority involvement through the academy school and free school programmes and changes to funding arrangements. In this new strategic role it is important for the Local Authority to consider how it will:
 - ensure sufficient high quality school places;
 - promote and secure school organisation to support sustained school improvement;
 - continue to promote schools in Harrow at the heart of the community; and
 - promote choice for parents and excellence in education standards.

3. Harrow Cabinet will be considering a report on School Organisation at its meeting on 22 November 2012. Cabinet is recommended to :
 1. Note the latest school roll projections that indicate a higher and later peak in demand for additional primary school places.
 2. Note the implications for additional school places that will be required and the significant pressure on the Council to fulfil its statutory responsibilities to provide sufficient school places.
 3. Agree that a second phase of primary schools should be moved to the statutory process for permanent expansion.
 4. Delegate to the Corporate Director Children and Families, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families, the decision about the final list of schools that should be moved to the statutory process for permanent expansion.
 5. Agree to receive a report in April 2013, following the statutory consultations, to decide the schools about which statutory expansion proposals will be published.
 6. Approve the approach to reviewing and achieving preferred models of school organisation with a report back to Cabinet in April.
4. A verbal update on the decisions made by Cabinet will be given to the Education Strategy Consultative Forum meeting.

Options considered

Background to Primary School Expansions

5. In July 2011, Cabinet agreed a school expansion programme as part of the School Place Planning Strategy. The strategy aims to secure sufficient primary school places through the creation of additional permanent places, supplemented by planned bulge classes and contingency bulge classes, opened if required. Following this Cabinet decision, engagement and consultation processes about the permanent expansion of schools were undertaken.
6. A borough-wide consultation was undertaken between 10 October 2011 and 11 November 2011. The consultation document set out the challenge for Harrow to meet an increased demand for school places and proposed the permanent expansion of 11 schools from September 2013. The proposals were developed following consideration of all schools and applying principles developed in consultation with a representative group of headteachers.
7. The consultation documents were circulated widely to stakeholders and interested parties including all schools in Harrow, councillors, diocesan and faith organisations, neighbouring local authorities and interested parties including MPs and voluntary sector organisations. Information was posted on the Harrow Council website and an item was included in the October edition of Harrow People.
8. The outcomes of this consultation were reported to Cabinet on 15 December 2011. Cabinet gave its approval to move to the statutory process for permanent expansion of recommended schools. The report stated that proposals for further expansions will be presented to Cabinet as required.

9. Statutory consultations, followed by the publication of statutory proposals, were undertaken about proposals to expand permanently nine schools on seven sites, and at its meeting on 20 June 2012 Cabinet approved the statutory proposals to expand the nine schools.
10. The next stage to implement the expansions in these nine schools is a building programme to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for the additional pupils. A plan for each school has been developed in partnership with the headteachers and governors. As a preliminary to the submission of the planning applications, open meetings for parents and local residents have been held. These plans will be subject to securing planning permission, which includes a period of statutory consultation, and are now at various stages in the planning process.
11. As part of the School Place Planning Strategy, Harrow has also been opening additional temporary Reception classes since 2009, with an escalating trend. 5 additional Reception classes were opened in 2009 and 2010, 8 additional Reception classes in 2011 and 12 additional Reception classes opened in September 2012, a 50% increase above September 2011. An additional Year 1 class was also opened in October 2011. This experience in Harrow confirms the reality of the significant increase in demand that has been projected.
12. Significant progress has been made to increase the number of permanent school places and this has contributed to meeting the challenge of the increasing demand. The consultation in Autumn 2011 proposed up to 11 permanent expansions. Following the consultation and in consideration of the responses from stakeholders, schools on seven sites were moved to the statutory process.
13. The report to Cabinet in December 2011 stated that further expansions would be presented as required. The most recent roll projections confirm that pupil growth will continue and the Council now needs to consider phase two of the primary school expansion programme and bringing forward proposals for permanent expansion.

School Roll Projections

14. The Council commissions the Greater London Authority (GLA) to provide projections. Officers review the projections and adjust as necessary to ensure that the projections reflect the experience of schools and the Admissions Service.
15. The updated 2012 projections indicate that the demand for Reception places will be higher than previously forecast and will peak in 2018/19, which is two years later than previously forecast. The high level of demand is then predicted to continue with a slight and gradual reduction thereafter.
16. Some of the key changes to Harrow's population are:
 - An overall increase in population including a 32.5% increase in the number of 0-4 year olds
 - Increased inward migration without the expected outward migration creating a net increase

- An increase in live births and overall household size.
17. Attached at Appendix A is the Demographic Information School Roll Projections 2013 – 2022 Report. The report highlights the changing profile of Harrow's population, includes commentary on the methodology adopted by the GLA, and presents the latest school roll projections data for Harrow.
 18. Given the rapid increase in pupil numbers, officers have undertaken considerable analysis of the roll projections and the models now offered by the GLA. As a result of this work, a different GLA model has been adopted to project the reception pupil numbers (For more detail see Appendix A: 'Projection Methodology' on page 2; also 'Accuracy and Methodology' on page 30). During this time of increase, the GLA model that is based on the actual pupil numbers for the previous year provides a better fit to the experience of demand for places. Officers have also adjusted the projections to take into account the impact of in-year applications, and the difference in pupil numbers recorded in the Department for Education's school censuses undertaken in January and May.
 19. The adjusted GLA model predicts that there will be more reception aged pupils in future but it is considered that this reflects more accurately recent experience. Whilst projections are a good indicator of future demand and provide the best estimates, officers ensure that there is flexibility within their planning to accommodate fluctuations in demand.
 20. The projection methodology has been developed to forecast the maximum numbers that are likely to be on roll through the school year. This approach helps with contingency planning across the borough by planning for the maximum number of places that could be required. This in-year growth has tended to take place across the borough, rather than in one particular school or planning area, and in these circumstances the Fair Access Protocol is used to place children in local schools. However, should additional forms of entry be needed in any area, contingency plans for additional classes could be put into action.

Phase 2 Expansion Programme Development

21. Much has been achieved with the nine permanent expansions on seven school sites agreed by Cabinet from September 2013. Additional places through free school initiatives should also assist. However, these latest school roll projections indicate that up to a further seven permanent primary school expansions will be required, together with continuing use of temporary Reception classes.
22. To identify schools for permanent expansion and bulge classes, a set of guiding principles were developed with a representative group of headteachers in July 2011. The factors included school sites, physical building capacity, quality of education, popularity and location. Officers have reviewed schools against these criteria again.
23. Since this exercise was first undertaken, the Government announced the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP). The aim of this programme is to rebuild those schools in the worst condition nationally. As part of

their application, local authorities were also invited to identify if schools were part of an expansion programme. 8 Harrow schools have been accepted into the PSBP and these schools will also be considered as schools for permanent expansion.

24. The challenge of providing additional places is complex and will only be successful in partnership with schools. The solution will require all schools to contribute. Therefore all primary sector schools have been invited to consider taking a bulge class and/or permanent expansion and officers are undertaking a number of visits to schools to discuss their individual contribution to the solution.
25. Officers have met with representatives from the Diocesan Boards of voluntary aided schools in Harrow to explore any potential for contributions to increasing capacity.
26. To inform the development of the approach for the next phase of permanent expansions, officers have also met with the representative headteacher group again. This provided the opportunity to reflect and review their experience to ensure that successful experience is repeated and changes to the processes are considered to address concerns.

Site Feasibility Reviews and Capital Implications

27. In nearly all cases, the permanent expansion of a school requires some remodelling of accommodation and/or additional accommodation. As part of the discussions with schools, a review of the sites and accommodation will be undertaken. This work will determine the capital works required and indicative costs will be calculated. As part of the consultation and dialogue with schools during Autumn 2011, feasibility studies were undertaken on a number of sites for schools proposed for permanent expansion. These indicative costs were reported to Cabinet in December 2011, April 2012 and June 2012 and will be reviewed during this process.
28. Costs for those successful schools in the Priority School Building Programme identified for expansion in the application will be met from the Government's funding.
29. It is proposed that a further report will be presented to Cabinet in April 2013. This will include up-dates on the position for September 2013 and 2014 and the outcomes of the statutory consultations on permanent expansions. This report will include capital estimates.

Strategic Approach to School Organisation

30. Harrow has worked in partnership with schools to secure sustained school improvement and used opportunities offered by changes to school organisation, especially the changes in age of transfer, to contribute to education improvement and place planning.
31. There are many examples demonstrating this, including the approach to the Harrow Collegiate, the Harrow School Improvement Partnership, primarily funded by schools in partnership with the Local Authority, and other forms of school to school support, including federations and executive headteacher arrangements.

32. However, the landscape has changed and will continue to do so within the Government's current policies and legislation. There are currently 63 schools in Harrow, 9 of which are now academy schools and one is a free school. Another free school is due to open in September 2013. The academy school programme continues to be strongly promoted by the government and it can be expected that more schools in Harrow will convert to academy status. Any new schools would be free schools rather than community schools.
33. In its role as a commissioner of school places, and in the context of a different landscape and the new legislation Harrow has been reviewing its approach to school organisation.
34. An established part of the Council's approach to school organisation is the school amalgamation policy that establishes a preferred model of primary school organisation as combined infant and junior schools.
35. The Amalgamation Policy was agreed initially in February 2005, and revised and up-dated. The most recent version was agreed by Cabinet in October 2008. Since 2006, 18 community schools have amalgamated to form 9 combined primary schools. 2 other schools will combine in January 2013, which will leave 16 separate infant and junior schools.
36. Harrow's amalgamation policy, is based on an educational rationale for a preferred model of school organisation that is a combined infant and junior school. When a school or schools meet the policy triggers they must amalgamate, unless there are compelling and over-riding reasons for them to remain separate.
37. The policy triggers are:
 - A headteacher vacancy arises in either or both schools
 - Pupil numbers are 25% or more below admission number in either school
 - Ofsted Inspection in one of the schools identifies a school as 'inadequate' requiring a 'notice to improve' or 'special measures'
 - Other situations whereby the educational provision would be improved through amalgamations. For example, these circumstances might include proposed conversion to academy status of one school, provision of SEN support, building and accommodation issues, financial difficulties, part of the Council's strategy for schools causing concern, staffing recruitment and retention issues
38. Since the amalgamation policy was agreed, there have been significant changes to education legislation which offer other management and governance arrangements to support continued school improvement and achieve the education benefits of a combined school.
39. In August 2012, two schools in different parts of the borough formed a statutory federation, with one governing body and one headteacher for the two schools, with a strong focus on improving educational standards.

40. There are also other changes which impact on the current amalgamation policy.
- The Government's academy school model offers schools the potential to become autonomous of the Local Authority and therefore the policy would not be applicable. At their meeting in June 2012, Cabinet confirmed their approach to Academies Schools and to work in partnership with schools regardless of their status.
 - The Government's new national funding formula is expected to impact adversely on smaller schools and will create an issue for schools that combine. Under the current regulations, it is expected that there will be the loss of a lump sum element for one of the schools that combine and transitional arrangements are not possible. This will mean that there is a financial disincentive to amalgamate.
41. Given these collective changes it is timely for the local authority to consider its approach to school organisation. On the basis that the triggers in the current policy remain, it is the expectation that amalgamation will occur unless there are over-riding and compelling reasons not to. However, in the current changing landscape it is recognised that the triggers also provide an opportunity for schools to review their school governance arrangements, and schools will be encouraged to consider a wider range of options that may establish an alternative model to secure the educational benefits of a combined school.
42. It is proposed that discussions occur with schools and that the comments and suggestions of the Education Strategy Consultative Forum about the preferred approach and the outcome be reported back to Cabinet in April 2013.

Legal Implications

43. The Council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure the provision of sufficient schools for the provision of primary and secondary education in their area.
44. There is a statutory process for permanently expanding maintained schools. This process includes statutory consultation and the publication of proposals with a formal representation period. The statutory requirements and national guidance will be followed when progressing any proposals of expansion of an individual school.

Financial Implications

45. Any extension of the school expansion programme will inevitably have financial implications. School revenue budgets are funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As the Department for Education (DfE) allocates DSG based on pupil numbers, any increase in pupil numbers results in additional revenue funding. This revenue funding is then allocated to schools based on the Schools' Funding Formula.

46. From 2013/14 the DfE have introduced significant changes to school funding. The legislation allows authorities to seek Schools Forum approval to create a ring fenced Growth Fund from the DSG in order to fund in year pupil growth. This is important for Harrow given the scale of additional classes identified through the Primary Expansion Programme. The Growth Fund needed for the additional classes in September 2013 was considered by Schools Forum in October: It was agreed to allocate £63,000 of revenue funding for each additional class to provide for basic costs for the period September 2013 to March 2014 (this equates to 7 months 2012/13 reception per pupil funding). In the following year the mainstream funding formula will take effect. This funding is available for additional classes in both maintained and academy schools but not Free Schools.

Capital

47. The current expansion programme is estimated to cost £26.2m over five years. The 2012/13 to 2014/15 Capital Programme, approved by Council, includes the first three years of the programme. The majority of the programme will be financed from DfE capital grants. However they are currently insufficient to fully fund the expansion programme so council funding, totalling £2.25m, has been allocated in the capital programme, plus additional funding required of £3.8m.
48. A further expansion programme will require additional capital spend. Until the expansion programme is developed it is not possible to quantify the cost. Estimated costs will form part of the detailed report to be brought to Cabinet in April. In developing the expansion proposals officers will seek to mitigate the financial impact by maximising the benefits from government policies and new housing development. For example, the contribution of Free Schools to school provision, Section 106 contributions to mitigate the impact of new housing developments within Harrow and the application of the Priority School Building Programme to the delivery of expanded schools. Whilst the timing of the latter has created difficulties for delivery of the first phase of the expansion programme it has definite potential for the delivery of phase two. The capital cost of delivering a second phase of school expansion would need to be considered as part of setting the Council's Capital Programme.

Risk Management Implications

49. The directorate and corporate risk management implications for the council arising from school place planning are included on the directorate and corporate risk registers.
50. The key risks for this programme are affordability and an over or under estimate of pupil growth.

Equalities implications

51. An Initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the school expansion programme. The conclusion of this assessment is that the implications are positive or neutral in that the school expansion programme will ensure sufficient school places for the increasing numbers of children in Harrow. As proposals for permanent expansion

are brought forward, there will be Equalities Impact Assessments undertaken on specific proposals.

52. Harrow's schools are successful and inclusive and provide a diversity of provision. The school expansion programme will ensure sufficient school places for the increasing numbers of children in Harrow and will build on the successful provision that already exists in Harrow's schools. The Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework that is being developed will consider the potential increased demand for school places for children with disabilities arising from the growth in the school age population overall.

Corporate Priorities

53. These considerations will support the Council's Corporate Priorities:
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
 - Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

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| Name: | Emma Stabler | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: | 16 November 2012 | | |
| Name: | Sarah Wilson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Monitoring Officer |
| Date: | 16 November 2012 | | |

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Johanna Morgan, Education Lead School Organisation
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Background Papers:

None