

REPORT FOR: EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Date of Meeting:	21 March 2013
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:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report updates the Education Strategy Consultative Forum on school organisation and related matters.

Recommendations:

The Education Strategy Consultative Forum is requested to note the report.

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 Education Strategy Consultative Forum receives reports on school place planning and school organisation matters. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for its area.
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. This report updates the Forum about the following matters:
 - Primary school place planning
 - Secondary school place planning
 - Admissions in September 2013
 - Free Schools
 - Strategic Approach to School Organisation
 - Special School and SEN Placement Planning Framework
 - School Capital Funding Allocations

Options considered

4. Harrow Cabinet considered a report on School Organisation at its meeting on 22 November 2012. Cabinet resolved to :
 - Note the latest school roll projections that indicate a higher and later peak in demand for additional primary school places.

- 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.
 - Agree that a second phase of primary schools should be moved to the statutory process for permanent expansion.
 - 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.
 - Agree to receive a report in April 2013, following the statutory consultations, to decide the schools about which statutory expansion proposals will be published.
 - Approve the approach to reviewing and achieving preferred models of school organisation with a report back to Cabinet in April.
5. Officers continue to work with schools to identify and confirm those that will be proposed to be taken forward for permanent expansion. Work is also being progressed on the strategic approach to school organisation as outlined in this report. When this work is completed there will be a further report to Cabinet.

Primary School Place Planning

6. The updated 2012 projections commissioned from the Greater London Authority predicted 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. The Demographic Information School Roll Projections 2013 – 2022 Report was attached to the report to this Forum on 3 December 2012.
7. In September 2012, twelve temporary additional Reception classes were opened to meet the increased demand. This was a 50% increase above the September 2011 level of eight temporary additional Reception classes.
8. Following statutory school expansion processes, Cabinet resolved at its meeting on 20 June 2012 to expand nine primary sector schools on seven sites from 2013. These expansions represent significant progress to increase the number of permanent school places and to meet the challenge of the increasing demand. Phase two of the primary school expansion programme is intended to meet the demand predicted in the latest school roll projections.
9. The challenge of providing additional places is complex. It can only be successfully met in partnership with schools and needs to take account of the government's reform agenda, including the free school and academy initiatives. The scale of the challenge is such that the solution will require all schools to contribute through expansion or temporary additional classes.

10. All primary sector schools have been invited to consider taking a bulge class and/or permanent expansion and officers have been visiting a number of schools to discuss their individual contribution to the solution. The need to complete this work, and the delayed announcement by the Government of the capital funding allocations for 2013/14 and 2014/15, mean that the decision of the final list of schools to be proposed for expansion has yet to be made and the timeline for the statutory processes needs to be revised.
11. It is expected that up to 7 temporary additional Reception classes will be required in September 2013 to supplement the 7 community school expansions agreed.

Secondary School Place Planning

12. In accordance with the projections there will be increasing demand on Year 7 places in secondary schools from September 2016. This will gradually increase. Currently there are a higher number of Year 7 vacancies than is desirable but this position is not replicated across the different year groups. There are a number of variables around secondary school place planning, including the Government's Free School programme, and the position will be kept under review moving forward.
13. Initial discussion has been held with high school headteachers about the development of a secondary school place planning strategy that was reported to the January meeting of the Forum. The aim of the strategy would be to consider options that would increase the capacity in secondary schools in Harrow to ensure that there are sufficient secondary school places. It would also provide a framework to bring together the strategic planning of the local authority with individual school development planning. The conclusion of this initial discussion was that the high schools did not wish to progress work on a strategy at this time but to maintain dialogue about school place planning and other strategic issues.

Admissions in September 2013

Applications for Year 7 places in September 2013

14. All applicants for Year 7 places in Harrow have been offered places. On the offer date of 1 March 2013, 85% of applicants were offered their first or second preference, and 71% of applicants were offered their first preference.

Applications for Reception places in September 2013

15. The applications for Reception places are being processed in accordance with the Pan-London coordinated admissions arrangements. Modelling is being undertaken to ensure sufficient temporary additional Reception classes are established to meet the demand for places. 3,000 applications were received from Harrow residents by the closing date for applications. This represented an overall increase of 204 from 2012.

Free Schools

Avanti House School

16. The Avanti House free school opened in September 2012 in temporary locations at Harrow Teachers' Centre and Krishna Avanti Primary School. This followed consultation processes which led to the Avanti Schools Trust and the Education Funding Agency identifying the Harrow Teachers' Centre site as the preferred permanent location for the all-through free school. Harrow Council facilitated and supported the temporary arrangements and co-operated with the Education Funding Agency to support its work to bring forward permanent proposals and to facilitate continued temporary arrangements until the permanent scheme was in place.
17. On 27 February, Council officers met with representatives of the Education Funding Agency and were informed that the outcome of Education Funding Agency feasibility study concluded that the Harrow Teachers' Centre is no longer the preferred permanent site for the school. The Education Funding Agency is pursuing an alternative permanent site for the school in the London Borough of Barnet. The precise location of the school has not been revealed because it is commercially confidential.
18. The Education Funding Agency has decided on the following temporary arrangements for the next academic year 2013/14:
 - the secondary phase of Avanti House School will be moved into temporary accommodation in the London Borough of Barnet;
 - the primary phase will be located at Krishna Avanti Primary School for the year.
19. Council officers will work to ensure that the transition of the school is as smooth as possible and that the disruption caused by this move is kept to an absolute minimum.

Jubilee Academy

20. The Jubilee Academy is being established from September 2013. The Education Funding Agency is progressing the identification of the site. The principal has been appointed and detailed work is being progressed for the opening of the academy.

The Olympic Academy

21. Academy high schools in Harrow applied to the Department for Education to establish The Olympic Academy free school, a three form entry primary school in Harrow, from September 2013. This application was not successful at the short listing stage.

Implications for school place planning

22. The Department for Education's decisions about free schools will have an impact on Harrow's school place planning. There is less impact for secondary school places given the current number of Year 7 vacancies in high schools. A school on the Harrow Teachers' Centre site is required to meet the increased demand for school places in future years

and this is reflected in the Core Strategy for the development of the area. The Council will now work with other partners to look into the possibility of opening a new free school at the Teachers' Centre site.

23. However, for primary school places where there is considerable pressure, from September 2014, the local authority will need to plan for additional places that would have been provided by Avanti House and The Olympic Academy. At this stage in the development of Avanti House, although there is no established pattern of application for places at the school, 60 extra places were available for school place planning. From September 2014, these places will not be in Harrow, and officers will need to make additional planning for these places.

Strategic Approach to School Organisation

Academies

24. Harrow has been reviewing its approach to school organisation in its role as a commissioner of school places, and in the context of the Government's current policies and legislation.
- Nine of the current 62 schools in Harrow are academy schools.
 - 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.
 - The Jubilee Academy free school is due to open in September 2013.
 - 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
 - Any new schools would be free schools rather than community schools.
25. On 7 February 2013, a conference was arranged by primary sector schools with the support of the local authority to promote discussion about different approaches to school organisation. The conference was well attended by schools and will assist their thinking about possible approaches they could adopt, perhaps in groups and perhaps as academies.
26. A number of schools are investigating academy status. Alexandra School is in the formal process of academy conversion and will become an academy on 1 September 2013.

Amalgamation

27. Two pairs of infant/first and junior schools are in the statutory processes to combine in line with the Council's Amalgamation Policy. These processes have generated queries about alternative models of school organisation including conversion to academy status and federation.
28. It is recognised that 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.

The local authority's preferred model of school organisation is for combined primary schools. The local authority will continue to review its approach to school organisation.

Special Schools and Special Educational Needs Placement Planning Framework

Consultation

29. A consultation on the draft Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework and options to increase provision was undertaken from Monday 12 November to Friday 21 December. Consultation documents were distributed to all schools, chairs of governors, colleges and other stakeholders. Meetings for parents were also held at Woodlands, Kingsley and Shaftesbury.
30. The purpose of the Framework is to set out how capacity for children and young people with special educational needs in Harrow could be increased to meet the rising demand. The options were around increasing early years provision and post-16 and additionally resourced provision at mainstream schools.
31. The numbers of responses was fairly low. However, it is hoped that this is very much the beginning of what we hope will be further engagement.
32. There were a number of key themes arising from the consultation including:
 - Positive comments about Kingsley, Shaftesbury and Woodlands.
 - Recognition of the need to increase provision and the challenges that this presents.
 - Responses suggested increasing the size of existing schools, but also acknowledged the site restrictions and the importance of not increasing the schools to a size that would lose their sense of community.
 - Both Kingsley and Shaftesbury governors would want to retain their post-16 provision.
 - A number of comments were made about the range of pupil need that would need to be met in the proposal for an additional post-16 provision, and about points of transition.
 - Suggestions were made about increasing specific provision e.g. for children and young people with autism, opening another special school.

Although Alexandra School will become an academy school, as part of the Eden Group, on 1 September 2013, the school will remain a key partner in future SEN provision.

Post-16 Conversation

33. A post-16 conversation has been started with the special school headteachers and the college principals. There were positive initial discussions and general agreement about the need to increase capacity and opportunities in Harrow.

34. The discussions clarified that additional provision would be developed with schools and colleges, building on the strengths of schools and colleges, that the governance models would be explored and the provision needed to be sustainable.
35. The group will be meeting again before Easter and will need to begin to consider a timescale and define the models that could be taken forward. This will also need to link with capital funding opportunities outlined below.

Early Years Conversation

36. There has been an initial discussion with Woodlands School and a further discussion is planned with wider representatives after Easter.

Mainstream Schools Additional Provision

37. Three specific responses were received in relation to the option to create additional resourced provision on mainstream school sites. Two responses came from individual primary schools expressing interest in provision at their schools and a generic response from the high schools indicating an interest to explore this further. A draft specification is being prepared to inform these discussions further.

Special Free Schools

38. A number of sponsors have approached the local authority in terms of their applications to establish free schools in Harrow or the surrounding area. The Department for Education is expected to announce the successful applications around Easter. Officers will need to assess the impact of any successful submissions on current provision. There may be additional capacity within the area and other potential implications, for example a change in profile of pupils, pathways etc.

Next Steps

- Continue conversations on Post-16 and Early Years. Scope the project with timelines.
- Draft capital business cases for the above.
- Develop a commissioning specification for the additionally resourced provision in mainstream schools for both ASD and EBD.
- Increase the engagement with parents in the development and refinement of options.
- Report to Cabinet on the recommended framework.

School Capital Funding Allocations

39. There have been two announcements for capital funding to which the local authority and partners have access to support the growth in pupil populations.

Department for Education Allocation for 2013/14 and 2014/15

40. On 1 March 2013 the Government announced the school capital allocations for the next two financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15. This announcement was delayed from December 2012.

41. For its Basic Needs funding allocation for the next two years Harrow's allocation is £14,692,131. This is an additional £8.8million based on previous allocations.
42. The funding is for school places and will go towards funding the Council's school expansion programme, which is designed to meet the increasing number of children needing school places.
43. The Department for Education also announced the launch of the Targeted Basic Need programme for additional school places in any phase or sector and includes special schools. This funding will be allocated to local authorities following an application process and successful applications will be announced in June. In partnership with schools, officers will be considering the detail and opportunities that this offers for school place planning in Harrow.

16-19 Demographic Growth Capital Fund

44. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has announced this funding to help local authorities with the commissioning of additional post-16 places due to the growing population; greater participation; provision for young people not in education, employment for training (NEETs); and additional places for learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). It covers schools, including Academies, FE Colleges and other providers for learners with LDD.
45. Officers will be working in partnership with the schools and colleges to consider what opportunities there are for this funding to support in particular the development of provision for pupils and young people with special educational needs.

Legal Implications

46. 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.
47. 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

48. The 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.

49. From 2013/14 the DfE has introduced significant changes to school funding, part of which is arrangements for funding in year pupil growth. Schools Forum has approved the creation of a ring fenced Growth Fund from the DSG, which provides £1.134m of funding for additional classes identified through the Primary Expansion Programme for September 2013. This provides £63,000 of revenue funding for each additional class to provide for basic costs for the period September 2013 to March 2014. 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

50. The current expansion programme is estimated to cost £26.2m over the period up to 2015/16. The recent DfE announcement of Basic Need capital funding of £14.7m for the 2 years 2013/14 and 2014/15 means that the first phase of the programme can be funded from DfE capital grants.
51. A further expansion programme will require additional capital spend, although 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 due course. 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. However they are likely to be insufficient to fully fund the cost of phase 2 of the expansion programme so additional council funding may be required from 2014/15 onwards. Any requirement for council funding will be dependent upon future funding allocations including the new funding streams of the Targeted Basic Need Programme and the 16-19 Demographic Growth Capital Fund. 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

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

Equalities implications

54. 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.

55. 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

56. 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

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	12 March 2013		
Name:	Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	11 March 2013		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Johanna Morgan, Education Lead School Organisation
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Background Papers:
None