

Draft School Organisation Plan

SECTION 2 PRINCIPLES GUIDING PLACE PLANNING IN HARROW

The LEA seeks to promote and secure high quality provision within all its schools and managing the supply of school places is an integral element of school improvement. Decisions about increasing or decreasing provision, changing character or other proposals must be guided by a framework that not only manages the supply of places to reflect demand, but also contributes to raising attainment, promoting the vision of Harrow schools and meeting wider Corporate objectives. When considering changes to the organisation of schools to increase or reduce the number of places or change character, pupil numbers and demand will be fundamental to the justification for proposing change, as will the geographical location of the provision in relation to area based projections. However, in drawing up proposals for change there are broader principals that need to be considered - those in general and those specific to increases or reductions in places. In addition, the LEA will seek to address Government Priorities if opportunities arise through school place planning. The LEA's principles are outlined as follows:

1 General Principles

Diversity in mainstream provision

- 1.1 In managing the supply of school places the LEA considers that to meet parental preference a variety of school type is required. This includes, denominational provision, single sex high schools, separate and combined first and middle schools, as well as adherence to discrimination legislation - sex, race and disability. Where there is evidence to support a change in school character or an increase in demand sufficient for new schools the LEA will consider these factors. However, given the consistently high demand for primary denominational provision within the Borough, it would be the LEA's intention at least to maintain the current ratio between denominational and non-denominational provision under any plans for change within the life of the Plan. The LEA would also consider exploring with local communities opportunities for faith schools if the demand arose.

Inclusion and provision for special education needs

- 1.2 Harrow is an inclusive borough and seeks to place pupils in mainstream schools whenever appropriate. The policy on inclusive education is articulated within the LEA's SEN strategy. Two Harrow high schools and five first and middle schools are additionally resourced to support inclusion, for pupils with low incidence special educational needs.

Size of school

- 1.3 In determining the size of schools the LEA seeks to secure a balance in planning provision which ensures that:
- each school has adequate resources to maintain high quality subject expertise and curriculum planning and establish pupil groupings which

enable effective delivery across the curriculum and deployment of resources;

- school size supports an effective pastoral system;
- provision of a degree of diversity to allow parents to consider smaller or larger school.

1.4 In practice, this means that:

- 1 F.E. separate first & middle schools are not a preferred option in making new or reorganised provision;
- a range of 2 F.E. combined and separate first and middle schools and 3 F.E. schools offers some alternative options to parents.
- each geographical area should offer a range of sizes of provision where possible;
- in the high school sector the planning of new or reorganised provision should reflect a minimum size of 5 F.E. although temporary adjustments may be necessary in some circumstances.

1.5 These Principles that guide the size of schools would also be applicable should Members approve a re-organisation of schools to 11 plus. For example, a preferred model of organisation wherever possible and as the opportunity arises would be Primary Schools – combined infant and junior schools catering from nursery to Year 6. However, it is recognised that there other structures which are successful. Future structures of primary education given any changes in the age of transfer would need to be discussed widely with key stakeholders including Headteachers and Governors.

Schools as a Community Focus

1.6 Schools can be a focus for their local communities as resources for learning and centres for community use. Maximising the use of school facilities to support community learning and the infrastructure are broader objectives of the Education Department and the Council. However, any community use of schools needs to be managed within the context of the needs of the schools and the demand for places. In planning and reviewing provision, the LEA seeks to support centres of local community learning in order that school provision builds on and develops existing community links and strengths.

2 Specific Principles for Expansion and Reduction

Expansion of Schools to meet increased demand

2.1 Decisions to increase the size of schools to meet additional demand will be informed by:

- To add new capacity the LEA must identify the current areas of surplus places or where they are anticipated to be lower than recommended

levels. Starting from 2003 this will be assessed using Net Capacity (sufficiency) results, part of the SAMP

- School and pupil performance consistently at or above national, local and benchmarked improvement indicators in all or most areas (EDP levels 1-2)
- The capacity and capability of the school, particularly for leadership and management, to cope with change
- Recruitment consistently at or above capacity
- Availability of appropriate accommodation or land for expansion and securing capital.

Opening New Schools

2.2 Where changes to demand require an additional new school the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- pupil demographics and the most appropriate location to meet this increase in demand within a local community
- a location that is suitable in terms of the Unitary Development Plan and other Planning requirements/constraints

2.3 Any new school proposals will be considered in respect of contributing to raising attainment, meeting community needs, continuing the characteristics of Harrow schools as educationally, socially and culturally inclusive and opportunities for partnerships.

Reducing the Number of places

2.4 The reduction of school places can be achieved through school closures or reductions within schools. The predicted level of demand will inform the extent of the reduction, i.e. the number of places removed, and whether permanent removal (closure) or temporary removal is appropriate. In certain situations, minor reductions may be required for short/medium term management reasons. For example, following a review of accommodation, to support consolidation of the school during a dip in pupil numbers or to implement Government or local policy objectives such as infant class size legislation, extensive daytime use of facilities to support community learning. Long term reductions in demand will need to be managed through a combination of minor reductions or closures.

Reduction

2.5 Decisions on reductions will be informed by:

- Recruitment being consistently below capacity and a predicted level of demand decreasing
- The stability of provision (consistency of performance/staff turnover/governing body effectiveness)

- The number of areas of school performance needing external advice as part of LEA support (EDP levels 3 and 4) E.g. low pupil performance, consistently high exclusions and unauthorised absence
- Essential building work that removes/rationalises accommodation, removal of temporary accommodation

Closure

2.6 Decisions on school closure proposals will be informed by long term decrease in pupil numbers and

- Recruitment consistently below capacity
- School performance consistently below national or local levels and benchmarked improvement indicators.
- Little/lack of capacity for self-improvement. OfSTED under-achieving, serious weaknesses or special measures (EDP level 3-4)
- Insufficient progress in relation to significant weaknesses identified by OfSTED, or of addressing issues relating to special measures identified by OfSTED within appropriate timescales.

2.7 Should closure be identified as an option for a school in the circumstances outlined above, the LEA will determine the impact that such a change would make on provision in the locality and within the LEA as a whole. This consideration would need to take account of:

- the availability of sufficient appropriate places to meet the immediate demand following closure of the school;
- the availability of sufficient places to meet the projected demand in the medium term and the impact on the LEA's ability to meet parental preference;
- the impact of potential pupil transfers on other provision;
- the value for money of such proposals in relation to the need to incur capital expenditure and/or opportunity costs;
- the options for making alternative use of assets released to provide places required in other areas of provision.

2.8 In circumstances where there is an insufficiency of places in both the immediate and medium term to meet projected demand and a school has not made sufficient progress to address serious weaknesses or special measures as identified by Ofsted.

3 Special Educational Needs

- 3.1 Planning of provision to meet special educational needs is affected less by changes in overall population and more by other specific factors, than planning within the mainstream sector. These factors include parental preference, the need for the LEA to ensure that it is meeting the current and future needs for pupils within Borough wherever possible, changes in best practice, the LEA contribution to regional planning as appropriate and the Authority's Accessibility Strategy.

4 Post 16 and 14-19 Provision

- 4.1 The LEA is an important stakeholder in the development of Post 16 and 14-19 provision. High Schools have a key role in ensuring continuity and preparation of students for a range of opportunities including continuing education, training or employment. The LEA has established relationships with the colleges and the London West Learning and Skills Council. Consideration of developing Post 16 and 14-19 provision will be undertaken in partnership with LSC, Schools and Colleges. It would be intended that the LEA would seek to secure developments in Post 16 and 14-19 provision, within the current organisation of schools, for Harrow's young people that:

- Raise the level of attainment
- Provide increased opportunities
- Increase the level of participation
- Contribute to the LSC Strategic Plan through shared priorities
- Secure partnerships across the P
- Schools, Colleges and neighbouring LEAs

- 4.2 This would be in a variety of settings and establishments, and would be sustainable in terms of finance and curriculum offer.

5 Early Years Planning

- 5.1 Planning to increase the number of early years places is undertaken in partnership with the Early Years and Childcare Development Partnership. In determining the number of places, type and location the EYDCP takes into consideration the following factors:

- Services for all children in need, to reflect the individual, family and community differences.
- Needs of lone Parents/Carers.
- Affordability and accessibility of childcare.
- Quality of provision.
- Special Educational Needs.

6 Harrow Admissions Forum

- 6.1 Harrow has established a statutory Admissions Forum as required by the 1998 Education Act (amended 2002). The role of the Forum is to consider existing and proposed admission arrangements to ensure they best serve the interests of local parents and children and that they are applied consistently and fairly to applicants regardless of sex, race or disability. The Forum needs to consider how the admission processes might be

improved and monitor how admissions relate to published admissions number.

- 6.2 As part of the consultation process, the School Organisation Committee will consult with the Admissions Forum on proposals made by the LEA, SOC or other proposers relating to sufficiency and distribution of school places.