

REPORT FOR: EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Date of Meeting:	6 April 2011
Subject:	School Place Planning Strategy 2010/2013 Update
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Adrian Parker, Head of Achievement and Inclusion Service
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix A - Summary of increases in Reception Classes

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides the Education Consultative Forum with an update on the implementation of the School Place Planning Strategy 2010/13 and about planning for September 2011 and September 2012 in order to provide sufficient school places in Harrow.

Recommendations:

Education Consultative Forum is requested to consider the report and feedback any comments from constituent groups.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To provide Education Consultative Forum members the opportunity to consider the progress of the implementation of the Strategy and for their comments to be noted accordingly to inform the continuing implementation.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. The School Place Planning Strategy 2010/2013 contributes to Harrow fulfilling its school organisation statutory responsibility in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to secure sufficient school places within its area in order to promote higher standards of attainment. Harrow Cabinet agreed the strategy at its meeting on 11 February 2010. The Education Consultative Forum considered the draft strategy at its meeting on 27 January 2010, and update reports on the implementation of the strategy at its meetings on 28 June 2010 and 10 November 2010. This report provides an update about the provision implemented in September 2010 and planning for September 2011 and September 2012.

Options considered

2. The School Admissions Place Planning Working Group is a group of officers with membership across directorates that collates data and analyses the range of information that is relevant to school place planning. The options to manage the number of places have been developed by officers in accordance with the strategy and discussions have been undertaken with schools. These options and other progress are outlined in the following sections.

Current situation

Demographic Data and Roll Projections

3. Harrow Council commissions the Greater London Authority (GLA) to provide school roll projections. These are prepared on an annual basis and take into consideration the current available data including population mid-year estimates and the Spring Term School Census data. The demographic information contained in the strategy is based upon the 2008 round of population projections released by the GLA and school roll data collected in the January 2009 School Census and previous School Censuses.
4. As a result of the continuing rise of births in London and nationally, that was contrary to the ONS 2008 based England assumptions that GLA projections drew on, the GLA has agreed with participating local authorities that its model should hold borough age-specific fertility rates constant for five years (2009/2010 to 2013/2014) before following the decline assumed in the ONS 2008-based projections for England. The implications of the revised projections will need to be considered, and may result in a change to the current projection that demand for reception places will peak in 2016/2017 followed by a slow decline, which will remain above current levels of demand in 2021.
5. Harrow's January 2011 School Roll Projections have just been received. These latest school roll projections, which are based upon the 2010 round of population projections and the school roll data collected in the January

2011 School Census, will be analysed by officers and considered at a meeting of the School Admissions Place Planning Working Group.

Reception Places in September 2009

6. Within Harrow the experience over the last two years has been an increased demand for primary school places, and this increased demand has been experienced by neighbouring local authorities also. This has been particularly apparent in reception classes. To meet the unexpected increase in applications for reception places for September 2009 five bulge year reception classes (temporary expansions) were opened, providing an additional 150 places. Four of these were in community schools (Belmont School, Cedars Manor School, Grange First School and Welldon Park First School), and one voluntary aided school (St George's Primary Catholic School) opened a bulge class. The response by these schools at short notice was extremely helpful and this additional provision met the demand. A few additional places were also provided at two schools by increasing the planned admission numbers to a multiple of 30 for reception.
7. Table 1 contains information about the planned admission number of the schools that opened bulge reception classes in September 2009 and the numbers on roll at the January 2010 and January 2011 Censuses.

Table 1

School	Reception PAN September 2009	Reception Census January 2010	Year 1 Census January 2011
Belmont	90	82	89
Cedars	90	70	81
Grange	90	68	69
Welldon Park	90	85	88
St George's	90	90	90

Reception Places in September 2010

8. For September 2010, based on projections and the experience in 2009, planning was developed to open five additional bulge reception classes and discussions were held with schools to make this provision available. As a safeguard for schools, in July 2009, Schools Forum agreed an Additional Class Funding formula to provide revenue resources to help meet costs for schools with bulge year groups.
9. Five bulge year reception classes were opened in community schools (Kenmore Park Infant School, Longfield Infant School, Norbury School, Pinner Wood School, Weald Infant School). A few additional places were also provided at one school by increasing the planned admission number to a multiple of 30 for reception. The response by these schools was extremely helpful and this additional provision met the demand.
10. Table 2 contains information about the planned admission number of the schools that opened bulge reception classes in September 2010 and the numbers on roll at the January 2011 Census.

Table 2

School	Reception PAN September 2010	Reception Census January 2011
Kenmore Park	120	113
Longfield	120	119
Norbury	90	90
Pinner Wood	90	81
Weald	120	106

Planning for Reception Places in September 2011

11. For September 2011, planning was developed to open at least four and up to six additional bulge reception classes and discussions were held with schools to make this provision available. Information about the intention to increase the number of reception places by 30, subject to the continuing increase in demand for primary schools, was included in the Harrow Guide to Primary Schools 2011/2012, and three community schools were named (Norbury School, Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School and Weald Infant and Nursery School) that had formally agreed by the date of publication.
12. In September 2010, letters were sent to all primary headteachers and chairs of governors informing them of the provision made in September 2010 and the planning for September 2011. Information was included about the 'late' applications received following the original closing date for applications and the actions taken to process this demand. The letters stated that the local authority was continuing its discussions with schools about possible bulge classes and would be working during the autumn term with four schools to investigate permanent expansion in 2012. Engagement with schools was invited to develop more long-term options, including a possible need for further bulge classes in September 2011. Schools were asked to consider again their school and its potential for temporary or permanent expansion.
13. On 10 November 2010 the Education Consultative Forum considered an update report about the position in September 2010 and planning for September 2011 and September 2012.
14. For September 2011, the Pan-London Admissions Scheme, which has co-ordinated the allocation of secondary school places since 2005, is being rolled out to primary schools. Parents complete a single application form even if they are applying to primary schools in more than one borough. They list up to six schools in order of preference and return the form to the council where they live. Eligibility for a place at each school applied for will be considered separately using the published oversubscription criteria. If a child is eligible for a place at more than one school, the local authority will offer whichever of these was listed as a higher preference by parents. There will be one London-wide offer day on 4 April 2011 when all parents will be sent the outcome of their application. Previously neither the offers, nor the dates on which the offers were made, were co-ordinated between authorities. It meant some parents held on to more than one offer, sometimes for many weeks, until they had heard back from all the authorities they had applied to before deciding which offer to accept. This resulted in a delay in allocating the places not taken up to other children.
15. The deadline for completed application forms was 15 January 2011. A total of 3,248 applications were received for reception class places in September 2011, 2,738 of which were applications from Harrow residents.

This is an unprecedented level of demand, and officers have worked hard to develop planning to meet it in a way that seeks to ensure every application received by the closing date receives an offer of a school place, while minimising the risk of over-provision of places in schools. A factor needs to be incorporated into planning to enable late applications from Harrow residents to receive offers following the London-wide offer day in April.

16. On 7 March 2011, the Head of the Achievement and Inclusion Service wrote to all primary headteachers explaining the position and seeking offers from schools to open bulge classes in September 2011. The response has enabled eight bulge classes to be agreed in time for the pan-London submission deadline of 14 March 2011 to enable the processes of making offers to proceed. A verbal update on the offers position will be given to Forum members at the meeting.

Planning for Reception Places in September 2012

17. Discussions with schools about planning for September 2012 progressed during the autumn term alongside discussions about September 2011, including investigation of possible permanent expansion from September 2012.
18. The strategy states that if the increased demand continues, as is indicated by the roll projections, and pupil numbers are sustained across all schools, then permanent expansions will be considered. Officers suggested to schools that the governing body considers establishing a Governing Body Working Group to develop planning that is representative of the key constituent groups of the school to report to the governing body on issues such as: school management and organisational issues; revenue budget modelling; accommodation; communications; gathering soft soundings; etc. For some schools, investigation led to the conclusion that permanent expansion will not be a viable option. Investigation is continuing at some schools and will be initiated at some other schools.
19. A difficulty for schools and the local authority for much of 2010 has been the absence of clarity about the availability of capital funding following the change of government. Capital funding allocations have been announced now, 50% of which is to meet basic need. This should assist relevant schools with their investigation into the possibility of permanent expansion.
20. Four schools, that had given formal agreement by the date of publication, were included in the annual admission arrangements consultation for 2012/2013 to increase their reception intake by one additional form of entry (i.e. 30 places). These schools are: Glebe Primary School; Marlborough Primary School; Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School; Vaughan Primary School. Additional reception classes are expected to be required at other schools.

High School Places

In September 2010, as part of the Harrow school reorganisation to change the ages of transfer, there was successful transfer of Year 6 and Year 7 pupils into high schools.

21. In order to ensure sufficient capacity in the high schools, 90 additional places were opened in Year 7 in September 2010. The impact of the

change in the age of transfer, coupled with the embedding of the sixth form provision, was unpredictable, and the increase was to ensure that there would be sufficient accommodation for all applicants.

22. The 11+ allocation for September 2011 is showing a surplus of 80 places. Rooks Heath College for Business & Enterprise has 70 places available in current Year 7 and 50 places in current Year 8, and consultation occurred in the annual admissions arrangements consultation to reduce the planned admission number at Rooks Heath to 210 in September 2012.

Voluntary Aided Sector

23. There has been some dialogue with voluntary aided schools with regard to capacity. There are no proposals from voluntary schools for expansion in September 2011. Krishna-Avanti Primary School has consulted about expansion to two forms of entry from September 2012.

Planning to meet future demand for Reception Places

24. Officers are keen to work with primary headteachers about developing sustainable provision to meet future demand for reception places. Analysis of the very high level of demand will need to be undertaken when further information is available. Because this is the first year of pan-London co-ordination for reception places we do not have comparable data for previous years.

Implications of the Recommendation

25. The views of the Education Consultative Forum will help officers develop the implementation of the School Place Planning Strategy.

Financial Implications

26. The Department for Education (DfE) allocates Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) based on pupil numbers, therefore an increase in pupil numbers results in additional grant funding. As the funding is based on pupil numbers in the January prior to the start of the financial year, there is always a funding lag when schools increase their pupil numbers. To ensure that schools who agree to take a bulge class are not financially penalised the school funding formula provides Additional Class Funding for the period from September to the end of March following which the mainstream funding formula will take effect.
27. Whether schools have suitable accommodation is a key factor when determining which schools are suitable for an increase in places. The school reorganisation changes created spare capacity in the primary sector that serves to minimise the need for capital expenditure for bulge classes. A permanent school expansion is more likely to require capital expenditure. The DfE have allocated a basic need capital grant of £3.2m in 2011/12 to provide school places, however future capital funding has not been confirmed. Any capital investment required to facilitate a permanent expansion will need to be considered as part of agreeing the future capital programme.

Risk Management Implications

28. The proposal to work with primary headteachers about developing sustainable provision to meet future demand for reception places will help to reduce risk that there will be insufficient provision of school places within Harrow to meet demand.

Equalities Implications

29. If proposals for permanent expansion are brought forward then there will be Equalities Impact Assessment on specific proposals.

Corporate Priorities

30. The School Place Planning Strategy contributes to the Council's vision Working Together: Our Harrow, Our Community and the corporate priorities 'United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads' and 'Supporting and protecting people who are most in need'.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	23 March 2011		
Name:	Sarah Wilson	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	23 March 2011		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Chris Melly, Senior Professional, Children's Services
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Background Papers:

School Place Planning Strategy 2010/2013

Reports to the Education Consultative Forum meetings:

27 January 2010:	'School Place Planning Strategy 2010-2013'
28 June 2010:	'School Place Planning Strategy 2010-2013'
10 November 2010:	'School Place Planning Strategy 2010-2013 – September Up-Date'